00058799

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

UNDER THE SUN

ESSAYS

B 2876

Mainly written in Hot Countries

BY

QX.d-37

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA,

Author of

MY DIARY IN AMERICA IN THE MIDST OF WAR; GASLIGHT AND DAYLIGHT; PAPERS HUMOROUS AND PATHETIC; ETC.

58799

a c

'The Thing that hath been is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done. And there is no New Thing under the Sun.'—*Eccl.* i. 9.

LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18 CATHERINE ST. STRAND.

1872.

917.2912
Sal/Und
58799

TO

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JAMES E. FORD,

SCOTS FUSILIER GUARDS,

This Book,

IN PLEASANT MEMORY OF DAYS PASSED LONG AGO

UNDER THE SUN,

IS CORDIALLY DEDICATED.

K

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
AN ESSAY ON WARM WEATHER	ix
EMPTY BOXES	1
FORM-SICKNESS	18
UNDER THE GUNS OF THE MORRO	34
THE HUMOURS OF HAVANA	53
HAVANA CIGARS	77
HAVANA CIGARITOS	97
A COURT-YARD IN HAVANA	113
THE VOLANTE	132
A HARD ROAD TO TRAVEL	151
THE DIVERSIONS OF LA SOLEDAD	172
THE CITY OF THE ANGELS	187
COCKPIT ROYAL	204
CUAGNAWAGHA	225
LITTLE OLD MEN	248
NOBODY ABROAD	266
SHOCKING!	283
KING PIPPIN'S PALACE	300
STALLS	317
WRETCHEDVILLE	329
THE HOTEL CHAOS	347
THE IDLE LAKE	366
POSTE RESTANTE	381

AN ESSAY ON WARM WEATHER.

I HAVE the greater need to pen an Essay with such a title as that which appears above, as introductory to *Under the Sun*, since I sit down to write it on the Twenty-fifth of May—the merry month of May!—with a blazing fire in my study, and the cat dozing on the hearth-rug, instead of enjoying her natural *otium* at this time of the year, in blinking on the coping of the garden wall. The housekeeper has just knocked at the door to say that the coals are nearly 'out,' and that in view of such 'bitter weather,' it would be as well to communicate with Messrs. Cockerell without delay. If the men with the sacks do not come, I shall be fain to bite my thumbs to warm them; and I may well strive to kindle a little mental caloric by writing about Warm Weather, lest—with the thermometer looking at me with the stony stare of a refrigerator—I should forget that there was such a season as Summer at all, or that anything but frost and fog could be felt and seen 'Under the Sun.'

I have given to this collection of Sketches of Travels and Manners the title they bear, for the reason that the majority of their number have a direct

reference to the Hot Climates of the lands in which I have wandered. The eldest of the papers is nine years old; and most of them were originally published in the pages of *All the Year Round*, from which periodical they have been reprinted with the sanction of the Editor and Proprietor, Mr. Charles Dickens. It may strike the reader (and in a stronger degree the critic) that some of the chapters in this volume are, neither subjectively nor objectively, of a very sunny nature, and have nothing to do with hot countries. I may point in explanation, first, to the reservation 'mainly' which appears on the face of the book; and next, to the facts that I wrote 'Wretchedville' in Rome, and 'Stalls' in Spain, under circumstances of an abnormally inflammatory nature. Those essays were both composed 'in a state of siege,' and in the midst of revolutionary crises; and they should properly smell of brimstone and boiling lava. With regard to the 'Hotel Chaos,' in which I have endeavoured to depict the aspect of the city of Metz during the month of July 1870, I can scarcely think that even the severest censor would feel inclined to question that it was hot enough in Lorraine in the city, and at the time I have mentioned.

So much for my book: but this is not by any means all I have to say on the subject of Heat. It has long been my ambition to say something in print on the subject of Warm Weather and Warm Blood in connection with their influence on the Literary

Style and Character; and I should wish it, in the outset, to be distinctly understood that I am not addressing myself to the jelly-fish section of mankind, to whom Weather, torrid or frigid, is a matter of indifference; nor to those Hyperboreans who revel, physically, in cold; who 'tub' in cold water on the First of January, and even when they are forced to break the ice with a hammer to reach their bath; who delight in skating, sliding, snow-balling, sleighing, 'curling,' and other arctic diversions, which to me only represent so many varieties of self-inflicted agony. Those whom I desire to reach should be warm-blooded animals, swarthy and sanguineous souls, worn black by the Sun's am'rous pinches. I am not writing for Philosophers of the Glacial Period, or the shareholders of the Wenham Lake Ice Company, or the dragmen of the Royal Humane Society.

Many more years ago than I care to name, when I was a little boy, the house in which I lived used to be thrown into periodical commotion by sudden and alarming fits of indisposition with which a near and dear relative of mine used, from time to time, to be attacked. Such a running up and down stairs as took place on these occasions is difficult of description. Warm flannels and hot-water bottles were sent for from the lower regions. There were no railway rugs—and few railways, indeed, in those days—but the thickest of shawls and wraps were in request. When the spasmodic sufferings of the invalid in the drawing-room became unusually violent,

the doctor would be sent for. I can remember that when the medical practitioner came he was accustomed to smile, and to say that the sufferer would be 'all right presently,' and that his invariable prescription in alleviation of the symptoms was sherry-and-water hot. And, indeed, when the flannels and bran-bags and water-bottles had been applied; when the patient had had a dozen extra coverings wrapped round her; when she had been laid on the sofa with a pillow under her head; and especially when the fire had been well-stirred and the hot sherry-and-water administered—she would rarely fail to fall into a tranquil slumber, and to wake up afterwards quite composed and cheerful, to be, as heretofore, our hope, and comfort, and joy. I should observe that these visitations always took place in the winter months, that their severity was in a precisely proportionate ratio to the asperity of the weather, and that their most marked symptoms were a deficiency of circulation in the extremities, accompanied by violent shivering. We children, under these terrifying circumstances, used to cower in corners, quaking with appalling misgivings; for we were but five left from thirteen brothers and sisters, and we had very early indeed begun to understand what Death meant. As it happened, my relative survived the severest of her shivering fits (one which took place when I was a very small boy) full five-and-twenty years; and I am glad to conjecture, nay, to believe, now, that ague or palsy had nothing what-

ever to do with my dear Mother's ailment. She trembled only because it was January, and a hard winter, and she was so very cold. She was a West Indian, and Cold to her was Pain.

I had the fortune, or misfortune, in after years to be sent to a school in which the boys were never beaten—nay, not to the extent of a rapped knuckle or a boxed ear; and to that circumstance, perhaps, may be ascribed the generally imperfect nature of my education, and my inability at this day to master the niceties of Latin prosody. Had I been duly scourged, I might by this time have become another Codrus, and—in slightly bronchitic accents—have recited another Theseid. I can nevertheless conscientiously aver, comparing my own experiences with those of friends educated under the beneficent rule of Doctor Busby, Professor Thwackum, and Mr. Plagosus Orbilius, M.R.C.P., that the physical anguish I endured during my school-life was quite as severe, although not so ignominious, as though I had been beaten every day into bruises and blains. I was never Warm enough. From July to September (if the skies were favourable, and there was nothing the matter with the Gulf Stream) I enjoyed a temporary respite from chilliness. During the remainder of the year I shivered. The Getting-up Bell (which was rung at half-past five) pealed on my ear as awfully, in degree, as the dreadful ding-dong of St. Sepulchre's may peal on the tympanum of the wretch in Newgate doomed to die: yet, happier he, the knell is audible

to him but once. *I* heard the Getting-up Bell every morning, clamouring and screeching, 'Come out. Come and be cold. Come and have a blue tip to your nose, and gooseflesh at the ends of your fingers, and chilblains on all your toes. Come, and shudder, and clash your teeth together.' That was the kind of invite I heard in the bell. I know that for a length of time I spent half my pocket-money in bribing a boy, whose seat was nearer the stove than mine in the class-room, to allow me to occupy his warm corner, and that I would smuggle additional clothes into the dormitories, or borrow my schoolfellows' blankets, to cover myself at night. I know that I have had impositions of horrible length set me for the offence of going to bed with the major part of my garments on. I had a schoolmaster, once, who was a clever and excellent man, but a little mad, and who had a craze about making boys 'hardy.' He was pleased to fix upon me as a 'chilly mortal,' and expressed a determination to 'make a man of me.' The process of manufacture demanded that when I was snuggling over the fire and a book in play-time, I should be driven forth into the bleak and bitter open 'to play.' Now I never could play. At this date, when I am grizzling, I scarcely know a cricket-bat from a stump, or prisoner's base from rounders. I never could throw a ball, or catch one, properly; and in childhood I was utterly unable even to 'tuck in my twopenny' at leap-frog, or to drive a hoop. So, while a hundred merry lads round me raced and gambolled, I used to lurk

in a corner of the playground and Shiver. We had a large bathroom, and (always with the benevolent idea of 'making a man of me') I was put through a bastard course of hydropathy. I declare that in the midst of the most biting winter weather I have undergone the cold douche, the cold shower-bath, and the cold sitz; that I have been packed in wet sheets; that I have been made to put a dry pair of socks over a wet pair, and thus accoutred have been ordered to walk from Hammersmith to Kew Bridge, before breakfast, in the dark, to make me 'hardy.' Unless another boy of the same 'hardy' breed was sent with me to see that I went through my training properly, I used to perform the journey from Hammersmith to Kew Bridge by sneaking to the widow Crump's shop at Turnham Green—she sold fruit, toys, periodicals, and sweetstuff—and sitting by the fire in her little parlour, drinking warm ginger-beer, and reading the Lives of the Pirates and Highwaymen.

The puling, sneaking, lily-livered milksop! I hear the Hyperboreans cry. I acknowledge the hardest of the impeachments; and I confess, indeed, that indirectly I defrauded my parents by my persistent chilliness; for we had a racquet court, a quintain, and a gymnastic apparatus at school. We were entitled to lessons in swimming, fencing, riding, and calisthenics; and had I availed myself of all the Olympian facilities at my command, I might by this time have become a distinguished athlete, well known in the higher mus-

cular circles in Elis. As it chanced, my good crazy master did *not* make a man of me. I grew up to be only a sickly, long-legged, weak-knee'd youth, with premature pains in the bones, which developed in later years into chronic rheumatism and intermittent neuralgia.

I had some glimpses of Warm Weather when I was a child, being much abroad, but only in temperate climes. But from the age of thirteen to nearly thirty I lived mainly in London, and you know what Cold Weather, and Warm Weather, in the British metropolis mean. With Creole, Italian, Portuguese, Red Indian blood in my veins (I am afraid that my great-grandmother on the maternal side was a squaw, and was tattooed), I was always panting to be Under the Sun—the *real* Sun, not the tepid simulacrum we see in this country—but it seemed as though my wish was never to be gratified. I was always repeating:

> Yet bear me from the harbour's mouth,
> Wild winds; I seek a warmer sky;
> And I shall see before I die
> The Palms and Temples of the South.

I saw them, and the Sun himself, at last; but I was constrained to seek my goal by a round-about route. The first real, glorious, blazing, sweltering Summer I basked in was in Russia. The Cholera was rife in St. Petersburg when I went there. The fashionable season was over, and all the grand folks were out of town. The streets were dusty, the canals were malodorous. What did all these things matter to me?

It was Summer, it was Hot. My rheumatism took unto itself wings, and flew away. I could once more feel my blood in its circuits. A long-congealed mind began to thaw, and during that summer in Russia I studied and worked more vigorously than ever I had worked or studied before, in my life.

Now and then, among the few favourable things people have been good enough to say about me, I have been complimented on the score of my 'industry.' Hearing such a compliment, I have chuckled, not bitterly, but with much inward merriment, as knowing myself to be constitutionally one of the most indolent of men. 'Ah, monsieur,' pleaded the French beggar to the stern economist who reproached him with his vagabondage, 'si vous saviez combien je suis paresseux!' If you only *knew* how idle I was; how I have wasted three-fourths of the time at my disposal—after the necessary deductions for sleep, meals, and recreation had been made—in purposeless 'mooning,' in hatching vain schemes, in covering the margins of books with trivial notes, in filling commonplace books with useless entries, in making sketches for pictures I shall never be able to paint! In the face of a shelf full of books, and thousands of newspaper-columns I have scrawled, I know that, so far as Time is concerned, I have wantonly squandered my substance and wasted my oil. I know, and can honestly declare, that so strongly is the *far niente* temper ingrained within me, *that I have never sat down to serious labour without reluctance, nor risen from it without exultation.* I

wonder how many 'prolific writers,' 'interminable scribblers,' 'assiduous hacks,' might make the same confession, were they only candid enough to do so?

One cannot, indeed, repudiate one's own handiwork; and during a literary course of three-and-twenty years, a man whose only source of livelihood has been his pen, must needs have accumulated a mass of work performed in some manner or another. The craziest dunce's punishment-tasks will fill many copybooks. Thus, when I look at the volumes and the newspaper-files before me, and ask how ever I could have nerved myself to knead all these stacks of bricks — often with the scantiest allowance of straw — I remember that I have always worked better in summer than in winter, and that I have always worked best Under the Sun, thousands of miles away. The Summer of 1864 was intensely hot; yet I managed to do more work in the United States, in Mexico, and in the West Indies, in three months than I had done in all the preceding three years. I felt my blood in every vein, and it oozed out of my fingers, and so into my pen's point, into red ink. The glorious warm weather melted away the mists and fogs by which I had been surrounded. I had been Hot and Happy. In a kindred but modified degree I have recognised the same influence of Sunshine as encouraging activity in my own individual case—and what do I know about other people's?—in Italy, in Spain, and in Africa. I have been at home now, with brief intervals of continental travelling, for four

years, and I have written nothing worth reading. No original book of mine has seen the light for a very long time; and my publisher had to make my life a torment to me ere he could incite me to collect these papers and correct the proofs. If any persons wish me to be industrious, let them combine in demanding that I should be banished very far beyond the seas, and to the hottest climate procurable. A double purpose would thus be served. Those who disliked me personally would be able to get rid of me; whereas those who did not hate me might profit by my absence by communing with me from afar off.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

Brompton, May 1872.

(*It is the warmest part of London that I can find to dwell in; and the mud in the Fulham-road takes two days longer to dry up than is the case at Hampstead.*)

UNDER THE SUN.

ESSAYS MAINLY WRITTEN IN HOT COUNTRIES.

EMPTY BOXES.

THIS will be, I know, but a beggarly account. There are few things in the world so hopelessly dreary to look upon, as are empty boxes. It is a truism to say that you can get nothing out of them. A full box may be picturesque, poetical. It may be Pandora's box, or one of Portia's caskets. It may be the Iron Chest, or Somebody's Luggage. It may be that notable trunk in which the mysterious Spanish Hidalgo, to whom Gil Blas was valet, kept his pistoles. It may be the coffer, gorged of millions, of the Wandering Jew. It may be Autolycus' box, crammed with 'ribbons, chains, and ouches,' or it may be the chest with the spring-lock immortalised in the story of Ginevra and the ballad of the Mistletoe-bough, or it may be the cowskin trunk in which Richard Cromwell kept the 'lives and fortunes of the people of England'—in the shape of the addresses presented to him by the English municipalities when he was

Lord Protector of the Commonwealth — or it may be the inscrutable sea-chest astride which Washington Irving's Dutchman went to sea in a storm. In short, a box with anything in it will furnish a plot for a melodrama or a novel, inspire poets and painters, awaken cupidity, excite ambition, fan the flame of love. With what wistful eyes have I scanned the great iron safe in a City counting-house! With what rapture have I gazed on a lady's jewel-box —the tiny casket with a patent lock, steel beneath, russia leather above—and pictured the dainty gems within: their lustre prisoned in coffins of morocco lined with white satin! Nor without a pleasant trembling—a hope not unmingled with fear—have I beheld the cash-box which Mr. Elzevir, of Ludgate-hill, has produced from his drawer, when, my account being audited, he has been persuaded to draw a cheque in my favour. Sweet cash-box, full of cheques, crisp bank-notes, gold and silver, and sometimes of acceptances at three months and I O U's! —I say that I have trembled, for it has been just within the bounds of possibility that Mr. Elzevir, a sudden spasm of hardness coming over his heart, might push his cash-box back into the drawer, double-lock it, and suddenly remembering that my account was overdrawn, button up his pantaloons, and dismiss me chequeless. Or, how would it be if, opening the cash-box, Mr. Elzevir discovered that his cheque-book was worn to the last stump, and begged me to call the day after to-morrow?

If this paper were to be devoted to the topic of boxes that were full, you should see that I had plenty to say, and to spare. The account of the work-box of a woman would fill a page at least. I could expatiate till you were tired on a schoolboy's play-trunk, with its hidden hoard of slate-pencil, and its inevitable substratum of contraband goods — say gunpowder, silkworms, cayenne pepper, or the *Adventures of Robin Hood*; — and I am sure I could pen several columns on the subject of a box to me the most curious of all,—the key-box; the locked-up receptacle for things which lock up others, the wheel without the wheel, the keeper of the keepers. It is on empty boxes, however, that I am at present intent.

Empty boxes! Take that symmetrical sarcophagus of cedar which, a month since, held one hundred choice Havanas. They, the *flor fina* of Colorado Claros, are all smoked out; you have not even preserved their ashes, which, mingled with camphorated chalk, are said to make an excellent tooth-powder, or, ground with poppy oil, will afford, for the use of the painter, a varied series of delicate grays. Old Isaac Ostade so utilised the ashes of his pipe; but, had he been aware of Havanas, he would have given us pictures even more pearly in tone than those which he has left for the astonishment and delight of mankind.*

* Much has been talked in modern times about the 'lost secrets' of the Venetian painters; and Messrs. Winsor and Newton have been worried to death by artists to produce new blues, new crimsons, and new yellows, by means of which the gorgeous hues of Titian and Giorgione

The empty cigar-box makes you sad. You must have injured your constitution to an appreciable degree by smoking, say fifty out of that century of Colorado Claros. You have lately discovered that your cousin Tom, on whom you pressed a handful of your choicest cigars when you left him at Gravesend, on his way to Bombay, is a humbug. It was owing to your cruel and brutal persistence in smoking the last of your cigars in the Blue Boudoir, thereby disturbing the afternoon nap of the Italian greyhound, and causing that intolerable little beast to sneeze thrice, that you had last Thursday a few words with the partner of your joys and woes, and afterwards looked out in the *Court Directory* the private address of the judge who sits in divorce and matrimonial causes, and has power to loose and to bind. Worse than all, you have a running account with Messrs. Lope de Vega and Co., cigar merchants of Bond-street, W., and the hundred Colorado Claros, all smoked out, remain to be paid for.

If empty boxes yield anything, the harvest is but one of regrets. The scholar who bade Albertus

might be rivalled. But the tints most thoroughly lost or mislaid are, to my mind, the pearly gray tones of the Dutchmen. Very few modern painters seem to be aware that gray may be, and should be, a cunning compound of all colours, and not mere black and white, with a seasoning of lake, or indigo, or ochre, to make it cold or warm. The finest grays, perhaps, in modern art are those of M. Abel de Pujol, in the imitation of bas-reliefs on the coved roof of the Paris Bourse. Those who have closely examined them may have noticed that in the shadows there are great splashes of positive colour, bright vermilion, chrome, and cobalt, which, at the distance of the ordinary spectator from the picture, give pearliness and transparency to the whole.

Magnus raise the devil for him, found, dashed in his face, an empty purse; and if you would conjure up the ghosts of dead hopes, and the phantom of the love that is no more, and the skeleton ribs, black and rotten, of the Ship of Ambition, aboard which you vowed to ride into the Port of Fame and seize the Golden Fleece—if you would lift the veil, and recall the agony, and survey the wilderness of desolation and the valley of dry bones, I would advise you to plunge into the contemplation of empty boxes. 'The late Miss Craggs's Estate.' Such an inscription on a japanned tin box, in a lawyer's office near Cavendish-square, once meant to me a thousand pounds. The box was full. I saw a will, trust-deeds, dividend-warrants, through its tin sides. I walked round the house that held the box, in my dreams, and woke up in terror, thinking that thieves had stolen it, and longed for the day when I should be twenty-one, and find a swift stockbroker, and sell my money out. It never did anybody any good. It is lost in the fastnesses of the Neilgherry Hills; it is at the bottom of the river Rhine; it is in Kensal-green. I shudder now to think that I may meet some day in Ship-yard or Brokers'-row an empty box, the japanning half worn off the tin, and the late Miss Craggs's Estate grinning out of the shadows made by piles of second-hand office furniture. I do not think I could bear that sight. I should buy the box, and scrape out all remembrance of Miss Craggs, and melt up the japanned tin to an unrecognisable lump. Saddest

of empty boxes; and O the vanity of youth untoward, ever spleeny, ever froward! What a school might be built, what a house bought, what a neat little purse made against the laying of the first stone of the Asylum for Decayed Turncocks by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, what a capital venture made to the Spanish Main, with a thousand pounds! Depend upon it, the Prodigal Son had an empty box, and sat upon it the while he tended swine and fed on draff and husks.

Saddest of empty boxes? No, not *the* saddest. There are boxes whose aspect is even more melancholy. Kicked about in yards, despised as the vilest rubbish, are the boxes which once held the sparkling *chefs-d'œuvre* of Mumm and Roederer, and Jacquesson, and the Widow Clicquot. Who cares for an empty champagne-box? An empty egg-box is stouter. The empty box which has contained bottles of Warren's blacking will afford a firmer rostrum from which Stump Orator may address his dupes. It is not generally known that the *haut pas* of the thrones from which theatrical kings and queens issue their decrees, and witness the evolutions of the occasional ballet, are often built up from egg-boxes. Champagne-boxes would be too fragile. This is the end, then, of all your frothing, and popping, and spuming forth effervescent delight. A bottle, if it be not cracked, may serve again. Shot, or a wire besom, may cleanse its interior. It may be degraded to serve as a candlestick for a tallow dip, but it may

be washed and purified, re-filled, re-corked, re-wired, re-wrapped in pink paper, re-exported, to make the name of the Widow Clicquot famous to the ends of the earth. But its empty box will never serve again. Rough deals are cheap, and can be easily nailed together, and daubed with mystic trades-marks and legends, as 'Fragile,' 'With care,' 'This side upward,' and a portrait of a full (not empty) bottle.

Writers who set up for cynics are very apt to talk of the skeleton closet which is said—although I do not believe anything of the sort—to form part of the architectural arrangements of every modern house. At least, I do not believe in the solitary skeleton—the one bony osteological 'boguey'—hanging to a nail in one particular cupboard, of which only the master—if it be not the mistress—of the establishment keeps the key. But if you will mount to an apartment at the top of the house—an apartment which is open to all, cook, butler, and housemaid, and whither the children often repair for the purpose of playing at Wild Beasts, or at Shops—you may find, not one, but twenty skeletons, in the shape of empty boxes. There are the portmanteaus, long since bulged into uselessness; the bullock-trunks of the lieutenant who died in India; the bonnet-boxes of the girl who bloomed into a woman and is now a widow; the carpet-bag you used to carry on those rare fishing excursions to Walton-on-Thames; the little, fat, black valise which was your companion during that notable week you stayed at the country-house of

the Lord Viscount Toombsley—the only lord you ever knew—and he cut you dead in the Burlington Arcade last Wednesday was a week. Pleasant journeys, joyous outings, trips to Paris, runs to the Rhine, wedding tours, jolly friends, pretty girls, merry meetings: the spectres of all these linger about the empty boxes. Look at the luggage-labels. You can hear the pat of the paste-brush, and see the red-faced porter trundling the luggage along the platform. You are off by the express. A guard has winked at you. He feels that you want a locked-up *coupé*, that you mean to smoke, and that he will have half-a-crown. You are off for Paris. You are off for Switzerland. You are off for the East. Empty boxes! I have one, the bare sight of the luggage-labels on which fills me with sorrow, with remorse, with bitter shame. 'Liverpool,' 'Manchester,' 'Boston,' 'Niagara,' 'Madrid,' 'Riga,' 'Cronstadt,' 'Wien,' 'Seville,' 'Frankfort,' 'Homburg,' 'Venezia,' 'Paris,' 'Maçon,' 'Milan'—it is a Bradshaw cut up into strips and stuck hap-hazard all over the lid and sides. I thank the prudent porters who have striven to tear off some of the labels. I am spared the remembrance of some. This empty box has held my gala clothes, my dearest books, my choicest photographs, my rarest bits of bric-à-brac, and 'the soul of the licentiate Pedro Garcia.' And what has come of it all, beyond forty and odd years, an augmenting stomach, a damaged liver, and a confused consciousness that one has made rather a mess of it, and had better have stayed at home?

But we will endeavour to be cheerful, if you please. Cheerful! How *can* cheerfulness be extracted from empty boxes: far less when I am about to conduct you to the dullest and gloomiest of all the boxes in the empty world. Silent rows the songless gondolier, and sullen plash his oar-blades on the waters of the back-slum canal. I am going to see the mornfulest sight in Venice. At the prow crouches the hotel guide. He too looks sad, although he is in my service to-day; for I have told him that to-morrow I shall have no need for his services. I have 'done' all the lions of Venice twice over; and Venice is in a state of siege, and I am the only tourist in the desolate city; and my guide has been half starving for weeks, and will wholly starve, I fear, when he has spent the last two florins I purpose to bestow upon him. For charity begins at home; and few travellers care to grant weekly pensions to hotel guides out of work, who are always bores, and often rascals. The oars continue dully to plash; and the gondolier—who has not had a fare for a week—only breaks the sickening silence by his lugubrious cry of warning when he turns a corner. There was a time when I went a gondoliering with the pleasantest of poodles at the prow; but darker and darker days have set in for Venice; and things have gone from bad to worse, and the city has faded into a cemetery. Whither are we bound? To the magnificent palace which has been turned into the governmental pawnshop, and through whose windows, now close barred,

but whose balconies were once hung with rich tapestries, and over whose sills fair ladies smiled, mountains of unredeemed pledges in ghostly bundles palely loom? Not thither. To the deserted halls of the great Pesaro Palace, now converted into an old-curiosity shop, rented by a Jew from Geneva? Not thither. To the empty arsenal, with its shipless basins and ropeless rope-walks—the arsenal where Dante once saw the pitch and tar boiling in huge caldrons that reminded him of the Stygian Lake? No; not thither. Nor to the island of Murano, where the huge mirrors and crystal chandeliers of Venice were once made, but where now there is only a paltry manufactory of toy-beads. Nor to picture-gallery, nor church, nor cabinet of mosaics. We are only on our way to see some empty boxes.

A dreadful beggar-man, by his father's side a leper, by his mother's a hunchback, and himself an idiot; a creature whose rags are so intimate with his flesh that the tatters might be strips of unwashed epidermis—this specimen of the Republic in Ruins with a long hook draws our gondola to the landing-place, holds out his shrivelled arm to help me to shore, cringing low as he begs an obolus for the sake of the Madonna, and is grateful for the farthing which I give him. (For as, all day long, the beggars of Venice buzz about you, and you are bound to relieve, say one in ten, you will find that a soldo, or farthing, at a time will make, before midnight, a considerable vacuum in your pocket.) We mount some slimy

steps, and pass under a colonnade, whose stones are damp and green, and recall those of a dead-house by the water-side. Between each pair of columns hangs a huge lamp, some faded gilding clinging to its iron-work, and its top crowned with the battered effigy of a phœnix. 'Those lamps,' whispers the guide, 'have not been lighted for seven years.' We stand before an old wooden door, the knocker and the keyhole red with rust, the huge-headed nails which once studded it half gone, the holes left black and meaningless, like the sockets of dead eyes. Paint it must have had, this door, in the bygone; but mildew has picked the pigment away, and streaks and smears of oozy moisture laugh grimly at what the painter's brush may have effected years ago. This was once a stage door. Hither the pets of the ballet came tripping to rehearsal, with wreaths of artificial flowers in their reticules, and practising shoes under their arms. Here the servitors of the Venetian nobility left perfumed billets. Here the great prima donna, Assoluta di Cartello, landed from her own splendid gondola, and, perhaps, condescended to be assisted to shore by the primo tenore. Where once her stately feet trod, is now only the brackish sea-slime. We knock at the door, and, after a while, a Judas-wicket opens, and through the grating peers a wrinkled old parchment face, with a few white bristles on the chin, which Balthazar Denner might have painted. A piping voice inquires our will. I answer, that I wish to see the empty boxes, and

I softly slap some loose florins in my pocket. The Judas-trap closes; but anon the door itself is opened, and a little old man, who might have been a junior clerk in an office close to the Rialto when Shylock did business there—who, as a specimen of Venice Preserved—seemingly in a solution of garlic—is highly respectable no doubt, but who is assuredly the nastiest old man I have set eyes upon during many a long day's march—entreats me, with many bows and complimentary adjurations, to enter. We cross a vestibule—the stage-doorkeeper's den—and see the rusty nails whence once hung the keys of the dressing-rooms, and the places of the racks where the perfumed billets once rested. It is inexpressibly dingy, and smells of lamp-oil a hundred years old. The nasty old man has kindled a rush-light, and, by its pale glimmer, guides us up a damp stone staircase. Then we go down some steps, then mount again, then pass through a narrow corridor. I remember that, some months ago, a guide as old and as nasty led me up and down the stone staircases in the palace of the Escorial. He was a sexton, and took me to the sepulchre where the kings and queens of Spain are buried in stone boxes resting on shelves, and where there are yet some empty boxes waiting for the kings and queens of Spain that are to die.

We emerge into a dim area, and stand on the stage of an enormous theatre. The sconces of the footlights seem to mark the boundaries of another world, and all beyond them yawns the dark vasty gulf

of pit. From a window in the topmost gallery darts, sharp and clear, one transverse ray of light, and I am enabled to make out at last five tiers of boxes, all perfectly empty. The woodwork of the stage is half decayed. There are as many inequalities on its surface as in the mosaic pavement of St. Mark's church. Can this rotten and grimy expanse, whose stiffened traps might be the 'drops' on which doomed wretches stand, the ropes round their necks secured to the timbers of the flies above, be the same boards on which Ellsler, Cerrito, Taglioni, have danced, in the midst of a sea of gas, and a shower of bouquets and a storm of plaudits? Can this be the place where Billington and Catalani, Pasta and Malibran, have sung? Yes; look behind you; piled pell-mell against the stark damp walls, rigid and faded, like the mummies of Titans, are the 'flats' and 'wings' and set pieces of the place. There are Norma's altar, and Amina's bridge, and Zerlina's bedroom, and Don Giovanni's villa, and Ninus's tomb, and Marta's spinning-wheel, and the supper-table of Lucrezia Borgia. I follow the nasty old man up and down more dark staircases and through more dark corridors, and now he unlocks a door, and I stumble into a kind of cell, which, the rushlight being held up and waved around, turns out to be a proscenium box, with a frescoed ceiling, and walls brave with mirrors and damask hangings. I have nearly broken my shin over an antique fauteuil once splendid in carving, gilding, and velvet, but which, on inspection, turns out to

have but three legs: and my foot is caught, to my almost overthrow, in one of the holes of a once gorgeous Turkey carpet. As we pass from the box, the nasty old man holds his rushlight to the central panel of the door, and there I see a flourishing coat of arms, with as many quarterings as there were in the scutcheon of the Princess Cunegonde, beloved of Candide. But marked with the stigmata of desolation is all that heraldry. The blazonry has faded, or has turned from sable and gules to grubbiness. I cannot make out the motto beneath, but it should be 'Resurgam,' seeing how remarkably like the whole affair is to the hatchments set up by cheap undertakers, who strive to persuade the natives of Soho or Tottenham-court-road in far-off London to allow them to conduct their funerals, by heraldically hinting in their windows that they have already buried half Boyle's Court Guide.

This proscenium box, and the next, and the next, all round, from the P.S. to the O.P. side, pertain to the proudest families of the Venetian nobility. The house, indeed, belongs to a proprietary, and three-fourths of the shareholders are Venetian nobles. On many box doors are their spectral achievements of arms and their antique titles. Tier above tier, vasty gulf of pit, stately crush-room with mirrors yet uncracked, and settees of velvet, and ceiling of fresco, and flooring of gesso, but all obscure and faded; corridor, and lobby, and ante-chamber, and grand staircase, and vestibule, are haunted by pallid spectres,

calling themselves Foscari and Falier, Grimani and Contarini, Pesaro and Grani, Papadopoulo and Nani-Mocenigo. I return to the stage, and peer into the cavern of shadows, sharp sected by that transverse ray from the topmost gallery, when, all at once, the empty boxes fill! Yes; there they are, fair women and brave men, in veils, and lace, and silk, and satin, and broidered stuffs, with swords, and fans, and flashing gems. The great theatre is lighted *a giorno*. The huge chandelier blazes up with countless crystals, in the midst of a frescoed firmament; and then the orchestra fills too, and I see the conductor, white-gloved, waving his bâton. I hear the loud bassoon, and the crash of the cymbals, and the scraping of many fiddles. The footlights flash up, like the demon lights in the *Freyschütz*. A vision in gauze and silk and artificial flowers bounds by me. It is Marie Taglioni. Why not? The Queen of Dance is alive still, and it would do her old bones good to come and foot a final jig in this place. For this is the famous Opera House of La Fenice. Yonder, in his box of state, is the King of Italy. Around him are the nobility and the beauty, not alone of Venice, but of his whole magnificent kingdom—There's no such thing; at least, not yet. There is nothing but darkness, and desolation, and empty boxes. If I can find e'er a ghost to tenant the state box, it will be a phantom in a white coat—the Cavaliere Toggenburg, indeed Luogotenente, or civil governor of Venice, representing the Austrian Kaiser. I see this ghost

of Toggenburg continually squabbling with the noble shareholders of La Fenice, worrying and baiting them; and they, it must be owned, rendering him as good as he gives; for the Italians are eminently skilled in the art of ingeniously tormenting, and these fifty years past the Venetians, if they have groaned under tyranny, and suffered misery from the presence of the stranger, have at least succeeded in making their masters desperately uncomfortable. Sir John Falstaff declined to march through Coventry with his ragged regiment; but I could tell of a penance far more disagreeable—to be in command of a regiment not at all ragged, but beautifully made up, and then to be sent to Coventry, and quartered in Coventry, and forced to stop in Coventry, year after year, to be cut, shunned, loathed, scowled upon, scorned, when, at the bottom of their hearts, your command is really a very jolly regiment, fond of waltzing, and good cheer, and blithesome company. Cavaliere Toggenburg wishes La Fenice to be opened, in order that everybody may enjoy themselves, and that his tight-waisted, white-coated officers may flirt with the Venetian ladies, and listen to the opera for fourpence-halfpenny, according to the tariff made and provided in dear old unsophisticated Deutschland. But the noble shareholders of La Fenice snarl 'No!' If they open the theatre at all, it shall be to hang it with black crape, and light it with corpse-candles, and intone a mortuary mass there, for Venice, laid out on the Lagoons so cold and stark. 'Come,'

cries Toggenburg, 'let bygones be bygones. Here are fifty thousand florins as a subvention from my government. Engage an energetic impresario and a first-rate troupe. Let us have plenty of masked balls next carnival, and the Austrian Hymn, with full chorus, on the Kaiser's birthday!' The noble shareholders will have none of Toggenburg's money. At the last carnival ball given here, there were but six maskers, and this forlorn half-dozen were dressed and paid by the police. From 1859—the year of hoped-for liberation, but, as it turned out, the year of the renewal of the lease of Venetian slavery—unto the year 1866 La Fenice has been entirely closed, and the spider has woven his web, and the flea has gone to sleep for want of somebody to bite, in these empty boxes.

Empty, but not, perchance, for ever. Ere these lines shall be printed, it is to be hoped and believed that the emptiness of La Fenice will have become a thing of the past—that the splendid house will be really lighted *a giorno*—that a substantial King of Italy will sit in the state box and listen, not to the Austrian Kaiser's, but to his own national hymn—and that the boxes of this historical theatre will be full to overflowing of the noblest blood, the brightest beauty, the keenest intellect, and the soundest worth of the peninsula.

NOTE:—The Canticle of Simeon can be sung now, as regards these 'Empty Boxes.' In November 1866 I went to a masquerade at the Fenice Theatre. Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy, sat in the state-box listening to the shouts of 'Italia Una' and 'Venezia Libera' ringing through the house. They only wanted ROME in '66. They have got *that*, now.

FORM-SICKNESS.

THERE is a mysterious disease which the doctors find difficult of diagnosis, and from which foreign conscripts are said to suffer. They call it nostalgia, or *le mal du pays*—in plainer English, home-sickness. We have all read how the band-masters of the Swiss regiments in the French service were forbidden to play the *Ranz des Vaches*, lest the pensive children of the mountains, inspired by the national melody, should run home too quickly to their cows —that is to say, desert. That dogs will pine and fret to death for love of the masters they have lost, is an ascertained fact; and I have been told that the intelligent and graceful animal, the South American llama, if you beat, or overload, or even insult him, will, after one glance of tearful reproach from his fine eyes, and one meek wail of expostulation, literally lay himself down and die. Hence, the legend that the bât-men, ere they load a llama, cover his head with a poncho, or a grego, or other drapery, in order that his susceptibilities may not be wounded by a sight of the burden he is to endure: a pretty conceit vilely transposed into English in a story about a cab-horse whose eyes were bandaged by his driver,

lest he should be ashamed of the shabbiness of the fare who paid but sixpence for less than a mile's drive. I was never south of the Isthmus, and never saw a llama, save in connection with an overcoat on a cheap tailor's show-card; but I am given to understand that what I have related is strictly true.

If the lower animals, then, be subject to nostalgia, and if they be as easily killed by moral as by physical ailments, why should humanity be made of sterner stuff? After all, there may be such things as broken hearts. With regard to home-sickness, however, I hold that, generally, that malady is caused less by absence from home than by the deprivations of the comforts and enjoyments which home affords. Scotchmen and Irishmen are to be found all over the world, and get on pretty well wherever they are; but a Scot without porridge to sup, or an Irishman without buttermilk to drink at breakfast, is always more or less miserable. The Englishman, accustomed to command, to compel, and to trample difficulties under his feet, carries his home-divinities with him, and has no sooner set up his tent in Kedar than he establishes one supplementary booth for making up prescriptions in accordance with the ritual of the London Pharmacopœia, another for the sale of pickles, pale ale, and green tea, and a third for the circulation of tracts intended to convert the foreigners among whom he is to abide. He suffers less, perhaps, from home-sickness than any other wanderer on the face of the earth; since he sternly

refuses to look upon his retirement from his own country as anything but a temporary exile; he demands incessant postal communication with home, or he will fill the English newspapers with the most vehement complaints; he will often—through the same newspapers—carry on controversies, political or religious, with adversaries ten thousand miles away; and after an absence from England of twenty years, he will suddenly turn up at a railway meeting, or in the chair at a public dinner; bully the board; move the previous question; or, in proposing the toast of the evening, quote the statistics of the Cow-cross Infirmary for Calves, as though he had never been out of Middlesex. In short, he no more actually expatriates himself than does an attaché to an English embassy abroad, who packs up Pall-Mall in his portmanteau, parts his hair down the middle, and carries a slender umbrella—never under any circumstances unfurled—in the streets of Teheran.

But are you aware that there is another form of nostalgia which afflicts only Europeans, and, so far as I know, is felt only in one part of the world? Its symptoms have not hitherto been described, and I may christen it Form-sickness. I should wish to have Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Tom Taylor, and Mr. Beresford Hope, on the medical board to which I submitted my views on this disease; for it is one architecturally and æsthetically occult. Form-sickness begins to attack you after you have resided some time —say a couple of months—in the United States of

America. Its attacks are more acutely felt in the North than in the South; for in the last-named parts of the Union there are fig and orange trees, and wild jungles and cane brake — some of the elements of FORM, in fact. It is the monotony of Form, and its deficiencies in certain conditions — that is to say, curvature, irregularity, and light and shade — that make you sick in the North. I believe that half the discomfort and the uneasiness which many educated Englishmen experience from a protracted residence in the States, springs from the outrage offered to their eye in the shape of perpetual flat surfaces, straight vistas, and violent contrasts of colour. There are no middle tints in an American landscape. In winter, it is white and blue; in spring, blue and green; in summer, blue and brown; in autumn, all the colours of the rainbow, but without a single neutral tint. The magnificent October hues of the foliage on the Hudson and in Vermont simply dazzle and confound you. You would give the world for an instant of repose: — for a gray tower, a broken wall, a morsel of dun thatch. The immensity of the area of vision is too much for a single spectator. Don't you remember how Banvard's gigantic panorama of the Mississippi used to make us first wonder and then yawn? Banvard is everywhere in the States; and so enormous is the scale of the scenery in this colossal theatre, that the sparse dramatis personæ are all but invisible. An English landscape painter would scarcely dream of producing a picture, even of cabi-

net size, without a group of peasants, or children, or a cow or two, or a horse, or at least a flock of geese, in some part of the work. You shall hardly look half a dozen times out of the window of a carriage of an express train in England, without seeing something that is Alive. In America, the desolation of Emptiness pervades even the longest settled and the most thickly populated States. How should it be otherwise? How should you wonder at it when, as in a score of instances, not more people than inhabit Hertfordshire are scattered over a territory as large as France? One of the first things that struck me when I saw the admirable works of the American landscape painters — of such men as Church and Kensett, Bierstadt and Hart — was the absence of animal life from their scenes. They seemed to have been making sketches of the earth before the birth of Adam.

This vacuous vastness is one of the provocatives of Form-sickness. To the European, and especially to the Englishman, a country without plenty of people, pigs, poultry, haystacks, barns, and cottages, is as intolerable as the stage of the Grand Opera would be if it remained a whole evening with a sumptuously set scene displayed, but without a single actor. New England is the state in which, perhaps, the accessories of life are most closely concentrated; but even in New England you traverse wastes into which it appears to you that the whole of Old England might be dropped with no more chance of

being found again than has a needle in a pottle of hay. But it is when you come to dwell in towns that Form-sickness gets its firmest grip of you. In a city of three or four hundred thousand inhabitants, you see nothing but mere flat surfaces, straight lines, right angles, parallel rows of boards, and perpendicular palings. The very trees lining the streets are as straight as walking-sticks. Straight rows of rails cut up the roadway of the straight streets. The hotels are marble packing-cases, uniformly square, and pierced with many quadrangular windows; the railway cars and street omnibuses are exact oblongs; and to crown all, the national flag is ruled in parallel crimson stripes, with a blue quadrangle in one corner, sown with stars in parallel rows. Philadelphia, from its rectangularity, has been called the 'chess-board city;' Washington has been laid out on a plan quite as distressingly geometrical; and nine-tenths of the other towns and villages are built on gridiron lines. There are some crooked streets in Boston, and that is why Europeans usually show a preference for Boston over other Northern American cities; while in the lower part of New York, a few of the thoroughfares are narrow, and deviate a little from the inexorable straight line. In most cases there is no relaxation of the cord of tension. There are no corners, nooks, archways, alleys: no refuges, in fact, for light and shade. In the State of Virginia, there is one of the largest natural arches in the world; but in American architecture a curved vault is one of the rarest of

structures. The very bridges are on piers without arches. Signboards and trade effigies, it is true, project from the houses, but always at right angles. This rigidity of outline makes its mark on the nomenclature and on the manners of the people. The names of the streets are taken from the letters of the alphabet and the numerals in the Ready Reckoner. I have lived in G-street. I have lived in West Fourteenth, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. Mathematical calculation is the basis of daily life. You are fed at the hotels at stated hours; and the doors of the dining-room are kept locked until within a moment of the gong's sounding. At some tables d'hôte, fifty negro waiters stand mute and immobile behind the chairs of two hundred and fifty guests; and at a given signal uncover, with the precision of clock-work, one hundred dishes. These are not matters of fancy; they are matters of fact. Routine pursues you everywhere: from the theatre to the church; from the fancy fair to the public meeting. In the meanest village inn, as in the most palatial hotel, there is a travellers' book, in which you are bound to enter your name. You may assume an alias; but you must be Mr. Somebody. You cannot be, as in England, the 'stout party in Number Six,' or the 'tall gent in the Sun.' You must shake hands with every one to whom you are introduced; you must drink when you are asked, and then ask the asker to drink—though I am bound to say that this strictly mathematical custom has, owing to the

piteous protests of Europeans, somewhat declined, of late.

If you enter a barber's shop to be shaved, a negro hands you a check bearing a number, and you must await your turn. When your turn arrives, you must sit in a certain position in a velvet-covered fauteuil with high legs, and must put your feet up on a stool on a level therewith. The barber shaves you, not as *you* like, but as *he* likes; powders you, strains a napkin over your countenance; sponges you; shampoos you; pours bay rum and eau-de-Cologne on your head; greases, combs you out; and 'fixes' you generally. The first time I was ever under the hands of an American tonsor, I rose as soon as he had laid down his razor, and made a move in the direction of the washhand basin. He stared at me as though I had gone mad. 'Hold on!' he cried, in an authoritative accent. 'Hold on! Guess I'll have to wash you up.' That I should be 'washed up' or 'fixed,' was in accordance with the mathematical code.

This all but utter absence of variety of form, of divergence of detail, of play of light and shade, is productive, in the end, of that petulant and discontented frame of mind—of that soreness of spirit—with which so many tourists who have visited the Great Republic have come at last to regard its civilisation. As a rule, the coarser the traveller's organisation—the less he cares about art or literature—the better he will get on in America. I met a fellow-countryman

once, the son of an English earl, at one of the biggest, most mathematical, and most comfortless, of the New York hotels, who told me that he should be very well content to live there for ten years. 'Why,' he said, 'you can have five meals a day if you like.' This is the kind of traveller,—the robust hardy strong-stomached youth, fresh from a public school, who goes to America, and does not grumble. But do you take, not a travelled Englishman, but a travelled American—one who has been long in Europe, and has appreciated the artistic glories of the Continent; and you will discover that he finds it almost impossible to live in his own country, or 'board' at an American hotel. Every continental city has its colony of refined Americans, good patriots and stanch republicans, but who are absolutely afraid to go back to their native land. They dread the mathematical system. Those who, for their families' or their interests' sake, are compelled to abide in the States, live at hotels conducted, not on the American, but on the European system—that is to say, where they can dine, breakfast, or sup, not as the landlord likes, but as they themselves like. Those who are wealthy, shut themselves up in country-houses, or splendid town mansions, surrounded by books, and pictures, and statues, and tapestry, and coins from Europe, until their existence is almost ignored by their countrymen. In no country in the world are so many men of shining talents, of noble mind, of refined taste, buried alive as in the United States.

That which I call the 'Mathematical System' is only another name for a very stringent and offensive social tyranny; and, did we not remember that humanity is one mass of inconsistencies and contradictions, it would be difficult to understand how this social despotism could be made compatible with the existence of an amount of political liberty never before equalled in this world. Until 1861, the American citizen was wholly and entirely free; and now that the only pretext for the curtailment of his liberties has disappeared, he will enter upon, it is to be hoped, a fresh lease of freedom, as whole and unrestricted as of yore. How far the social despotism spoken of has extended would be almost incredible to those who have not resided in America. 'Whatever you do,' said an American to me on the first day of my landing in the States, 'don't live in a boarding-house where you are to be treated as one of the family. They'll worry you to death by wanting to take care of your morals.' To have one's morals taken care of is a very excellent thing; but, as a rule, you prefer to place the curatorship thereof in the hands of your parents and guardians, or of your ghostly director, or, being of mature age, of yourself. 'Taking care of morals' is apt to degenerate into petty impertinence and espionage. One of the most eminent of living sculptors in New York told me that for many years he experienced the greatest difficulty in pursuing the studies incidental to, and indeed essential to his attaining excellence in his profession, owing to the persistent care taken of

his morals by the lady who officiated as housekeeper in the chambers where he lived. It must be premised that these chambers formed part of a building specially erected for the accommodation of artists, and with a view to their professional requirements. Our sculptor had frequent need of the assistance of female models, and the 'Janitress,' as the lady housekeeper was called, had a virtuously indignant objection to young persons who posed as Venuses or Hebes, in the costume of the mythological period, for a dollar an hour. She could only be induced by the threat of dismissal from the proprietor of the studio building to grant admission to the models at all; even then she would await their exit at her lodge gate, and abuse them as they came down-stairs. Much more acclimatised to models was the good sister of William Etty, who used to seek out his Venuses for him; but a transition state of feeling was that of the wife of Nollekens, the sculptor, who, whenever her husband had a professional sitter, and the day was very cold, used to burst into the studio with a basin in her hand, crying: 'You nasty, good-for-nothing hussey, here's some hot mutton broth for you.'

To recapitulate a little. Form-sickness is the unsatisfied yearning for those broken lines, irregular forms, and infinite gradations of colour—reacting as those conditions of form invariably do on the manners and characteristics of the people—which are only to be met with in very old countries. However

expensively and elegantly dressed a man may be, he is apt to feel uncomfortable in a bran-new hat, a bran-new coat and trowsers, and bran-new boots and gloves; and I believe that if he were compelled to put on a bran-new suit every morning, he would hang himself before a month was over, and send his abhorred garments to Madame Tussaud's, to swell the wardrobe in the Chamber of Horrors. The sensation of entire novelty is one inseparable from the outward aspect of America. You can smell the paint and varnish; the glue is hardly dry. The reasons for this are very obvious. American civilisation is an independent and self-reliant entity. It has no connections, or ties, or foregatherings with any predecessors on its own soil. It is not the heir of long entailed patrimony. It is, like Rodolph of Hapsburg, the first of its race. It has slain and taken possession. In Great Britain we have yet Stonehenge and some cairns and cromlechs to remind us of the ancient Britons' acts; but in the settled parts of the United States, apart from the Indian names of some towns and rivers, there remains not the remotest vestige to recall the existence of the former possessors of the soil. There are yet outlying districts, millions of acres square, where Red Indians hunt, and fight, and steal, and scalp; but American civilisation marches up, kills or deports them—at all events, entirely 'improves' them off the face of the land. They leave no trace behind; and the bran-new civilisation starts up in a night, like a mushroom. Where yesterday was

a wigwam, to-day is a Doric meeting-house, also a bank, and a grand pianoforte; where yesterday the medicine-man muttered his incantations, to-morrow an advertising corn-cutter opens his shop; and in place of a squaw, embroidering moccasins, and cudgelled by the drunken brave, her spouse, we have a tight-laced young lady, with a chignon and a hooped skirt, taking academical degrees, and talking shrilly about Woman's Rights.* A few years since, the trapper and pioneer race formed a transition stage between the cessation of barbarism and the advent of civilisation. The pioneer was a simple-minded man; and so soon as a clearing grew too civilised for him, he would shoulder his hatchet and rifle, and move farther out into the wilds. I have heard of one whose signal for departure was the setting up of a printing press in his settlement. 'Those darned newspapers,' he remarked, 'made one's cattle stray so.' But railway extension, and the organisation in the Atlantic cities of enormous caravans of emigrants, are gradually thinning the ranks of the pioneers. In a few years, Natty Bumppo, Leatherstocking, the Deerslayer, the Pathfinder, will be legendary. Civilisation moves now *en masse*. There is scarcely any advanced guard. Few skirmishers are thrown out. The main body swoops down on the place to be occupied, and civilises it in one decided charge.

It may be advantageous to compare such a sud-

* And I wish that she would talk more shrilly still, all over the world, until those Rights are granted.

den substitution of a settled community for a howling wilderness, with the slow and tentative growth of our home surroundings. European civilisation resembles the church of St. Eustache at Paris, in whose exterior Gothic niches and pinnacles, Byzantine arches, Corinthian columns, Composite cornices, and Renaissance doorways, are all jumbled together. Every canon of architectural taste is violated; but the parts still cohere; a very solid façade still rears its head; and, at a certain distance, its appearance is not inharmonious. At Cologne, in Germany, they will point out to you an ancient building, here a bit of Lombard, here a morsel of florid Gothic, here some unmistakable Italian, and here ten feet of genuine old Roman wall. There are many Christian churches in Italy whose walls are supported by columns taken from Pagan temples. The entire system, physical as well as moral, has been the result of growth upon growth, of gradual intercalation and emendation, of perpetual cobbling and piecing and patching; and although at last, like Sir John Cutler's silk stockings, which his maid darned so often with worsted that no part of the original fabric remained, the ancient foundations may have become all but invisible, they are still latent, and give solidity to the superstructure. We look upon the edifice, indeed, as we would on something that has taken root:—that has something to rest upon. We regard it as we would that hoary old dome of St. Peter's at Rome. We know how long it took to build, and we trust that it will endure

for ever. The bran-new civilisation we are apt to look at more in the light of a balloon. It is very astonishing. We wonder how ever it contrived to rise so high, and how long it will be before it comes down again; and we earnestly hope that it will not burst.

It is not necessary to avow any kind of partisan predilection for one phase of civilisation as against another. It is sufficient to note the fact: that Europeans the least prejudiced, and the most ardent admirers of the political institutions of the United States, very soon grow fretful and uneasy there, and are unable to deny, when they come back, that the country is not an elegant or a comfortable one to look upon. I attribute this solely to æsthetic causes. I do not believe that Englishmen grumble at America because the people are given to expectoration, or 'guessing,' or 'calculating,' or trivialities of that kind. Continental Europeans expectorate quite as freely as the Americans, and for rude cross questioning of strangers, I will back a German against the most inquisitive of New Englanders. It is in the eye that the mischief lies. It is the bran-new mathematical outline of Columbia that drives the Englishman into Form-sickness, and ultimately to the disparagement and misrepresentation of a very noble country. In many little matters of detail, American manners differ from ours; but in the aggregate we are still one family. Americans speak our language—frequently with far greater purity and felicity of expression than

we ourselves do—they read our books, and we are very often glad and proud to read theirs. They have a common inheritance with us in the historic memories we most prize. If they would only round off their corners a little! If they would only give us a few crescents and ovals in lieu of 'blocks'! If they would only remember that the circle as well as the rectangle is a figure in mathematics, and that the curvilinear is, after all, the Line of Beauty!

UNDER THE GUNS OF THE MORRO.

THERE used some years ago to be a little tobacconist's shop, somewhere between Pall-Mall and Duncannon-street, by the sign of the Morro Castle. It was such a little shop, and it smelt so strongly of cedar and of the Indian weed, that itself was not unlike a cigar-box. Here I used to think a threepenny cigar about the greatest luxury in which a young man of pleasure could indulge; but a luxury only to be ventured upon at the occurrence of solemn festivals, and when the treasures of the mines of Potosi, to the extent of a few shillings, lay loose in one's waistcoat-pocket. There *were* threepenny cigars in th ose days, and they were delicious. I am afraid that the manufacture has ceased, or that the threepennies have lost their flavour, for Ensign and Lieutenant Dickeystrap, of the Guards, declares that you cannot get anything fit to smoke under ninepence, and that a really tolerable 'weed' will 'stand you in' eighteenpence. Prince Fortunatus, they say, gives half-a-crown apiece for his Regalias. The Morro Castle, however, did a very modest but, I believe, remunerative business in cigars at from threepence to sixpence each. Well do I remember courtly old Mr. Alcachofado, the proprietor of the Morro—always in the same

well-buttoned frock-coat, always with the same tall shiny hat with the broad turned-up brim—always puffing at, apparently, the same stump of a choice Londres. It was well worth while laying out threepence at the Morro Castle; for, in consideration of that modest investment, you were treated, for at least five minutes, like a peer of the realm. Mr. Alcachofado himself selected your cigar, and, if you approved of it, snipped off the end in a little patent machine, and presented it to you with a grave bow. You proposed to light it; but this Mr. Alcachofado would by no means permit. He drew a splint from a stack in a japanned stand, kindled it at the gas-jet, and with another bow handed it to you. If you wished to fill the heart of Mr. Alcachofado with anguish, and to pass in his eyes for a person of the very worst breeding, you would, when the splint had served your turn, cast it on the floor, and trample it under foot. I have seen the proprietor of the Morro glare at people who did this, as though he would have dearly liked to take off his curly-brimmed hat and fling it at their heads. Regular customers knew well the etiquette of the Morro, which was gently to blow out the tiny flame of the splint, and place it horizontally on the top of the fasces in the japanned tin box. Then *you* bowed to Mr. Alcachofado, and *he* bowed in return; and, taking a seat, if you liked, on a huge cigar chest, you proceeded to smoke the calumet of peace. Did I say that for five minutes you would be treated like a nobleman? You might softly kick your heels,

and meditate on the transitory nature of earthly things, in that snug little shop for nearly half an hour. Threepenny cigars lasted five-and-twenty minutes in those days. Austere personages of aristocratic mien patronised Mr. Alcachofado. They looked like County Members; masters in Chancery, Charity Commissioners. They looked as though they belonged to clubs. They called the proprietor Alcatchanything, without the Mr. He was gravely courteous to them, but not more so than to humbler patrons. I remember that he always took in the second edition of the *Globe*. I have, in my time, bespoken it, I think, not without fear and trembling, from a Baronet. They were affable creatures, those exalted ones, and talked sedate commonplaces about the House, and the crops, and the revenue, until I used to fancy I had land and beeves and a stake in the country. There was only one absolutely haughty customer. He wore a spencer and gaiters, and sometimes swore. He smoked a costlier cigar than the ordinary race of puffers; and one had to rise from the big cigar chest while Mr. Alcachofado, a shining bunch of keys in hand, like a discreet sacristan, unlocked this treasure-coffer, and produced regalias of price. Yet even this haughty man in the spencer gave me a bow once when I brushed by him in the lobby of the House, where I had been waiting two hours and a quarter on a night when Sir Robert Peel was 'up,' in the vain hope of getting into the strangers' gallery with an Irish member's order. The haughty man thought he knew

me. I felt so proud that I had my hair cut the very next day, and determined, like Mr. Pepys, to 'go more like myself.' A grave company we were at Mr. Alcachofado's. Now and then, on Opera nights, dandies in evening dress would stroll in to smoke a cigarette. There was great scandal one evening—it was Grisi's benefit—when a tall young man, with a white cravat and a tawny moustache, ordered Mr. Alcachofado to 'open him a bottle of soda, and look sharp.' Those were his very words. There was a commotion among the customers. Soda-water! Was this a tobacconist's and fancy stationer's in the Clapham-road? As well might you have asked the beadle of St. George's, Hanover-square, for hot whisky-toddy between psalm and sermon. Mr. Alcachofado, under the circumstances, was calm. He gave the tall young desperado one look, to wither him, and in slow and measured accents, not devoid of a touch of sarcasm, replied, 'I sell neither soda-water, nor ginger-beer, nor walking-sticks, nor penny valentines, sir.' The customers grimly chuckled at this overwhelming rebuke. There was nothing left for the tall young man but to withdraw; but, as I was nearest the door, I am constrained to state that as he lounged out he remarked that the 'old guy,' meaning Mr. Alcachofado, 'seemed doosid crusty.'

He is gone, this Grandison of the counter and till—gone, seemingly, with most other professors of the grande manière. The modern tobacconist is loud voiced and obtrusive; proposes to send you home a

box of the 'Cabana Kings' of which you have scarcely tasted one; and, ere you have been in his shop five minutes, gives you a tip for the Two Thousand Guineas. This was not Mr. Alcachofado's way of doing business. By-the-by, why wasn't he a Señor? But he betrayed no symptoms of Iberian extraction; and when, seeing an engraving of the Morro Castle itself on one of his cedar boxes, I strove to draw him out, and asked him if the picture resembled the place itself, he replied, ambiguously, that he had not visited foreign parts—adding, after a moment's pause, that he did not approve of their ways. Whence his Spanish name, then? Whence anybody's name? I dealt with a greengrocer once who had the self-same appellation as the last prime minister of Constantine Palæologus. How Mr. Alcachofado had come to enter the tobacco business—unless he was a retired Custom-house officer—was to me a mystery. There was a dim something about him that always led you to fancy that before he had dealt in cigars, he had been in the Church.

The Morro Castle had to me always a fascinating sound. There were three boys at the school at Turnham-green, where I completed my education—that is to say, where on the last day of my last 'half' I began to discover that I didn't know anything—three Spanish Creole boys, all hailing from Havana. They kept very close together, and aloof from the rest of the school, and wrapped themselves up in Castilian pride as in cloaks; indeed, one of them subsequently

admitted to me, that, on leaving Cuba, his papa had given him two special cautions: to beware of the 'Estrangeros,' and not to show them—'enseñar'—the Spanish tongue. We, too, were rather shy of them at first; for there was a received tradition among us, that all foreign boys, when moved to anger, stabbed. Very unjustly we christened the youngest Creole, Dagger; his little brother, Bodkin; and the third, who was a tall lean lad with glittering eyes, Carving-knife. I think a good deal of nonsense—as could be proved by the police reports and the Old Bailey sessions papers—has been talked about the 'un-English' nature of the crime of stabbing. It is not the custom to carry deadly weapons on the person in England, for the reason that the laws for the protection of life and property are very stringent, and, in the main, efficiently administered; *but I never heard of a drunken savage Englishman, who could get hold of a knife in a row, who wouldn't use it;* nor, as regards the softer sex, are the biting off the nose of an adversary, and the searing of her face with a red-hot poker quite 'un-English' or un-Irish practices.

Our schoolmaster, who was an eccentric instructor, half Pestalozzi and half Philosopher Square, had an idea that all Spanish children were weaned upon tobacco, and absolutely permitted these three Creole lads to smoke: on condition, however, that they should not light up their papelitos until night-time, when the other boys went to bed. How we used to envy them, as, marching in Indian file to our dormitories, we could

see those favoured young Dons enrolling their squares of tissue-paper, preparatory to a descent into the playground and a quiet smoke! The demoralisation among the juvenile community, caused by this concession to Spanish customs, was but slight. One or two of us tried surreptitious weeds on half-holiday afternoons; but the Widow Jones in Chiswick-lane did not keep quite such choice brands in stock as did Mr. Alcachofado of the Morro Castle; and Nemesis, in the shape of intolerable nausea, very soon overtook us. It is astounding, at fourteen years of age, how much agony of heart, brain, and stomach, can be got out of one penny Pickwick. Pestalozzi Square, Ph.Dr., very wisely refrained from excessive severity on this head. He made it publicly known that a boy detected in smoking would not necessarily be caned, but that on three alternate days for a week following the discovery of his offence, he would be supplied at 1 P.M. with a clean tobacco-pipe and half an ounce of prime shag in lieu of dinner. We had very few unlicensed smokers after this announcement.

It was my singular good fortune, ere I left the tutelage of the sage of Turnham-green, to be admitted to the acquaintance, and almost to the intimacy, of the three Creoles. I had somewhat of a Spanish-sounding name and lineage, and they deemed me not wholly to belong to the 'Estrangeros;' at all events, they talked to me, 'showed' me some Castilian which was subsequently very useful to me, and told me as much as I hungered and thirsted

to know about the Morro Castle. For, long before I began to deal with Mr. Alcachofado, I had pondered over a picture of this fortress, and mused as to what its real aspect might be. So, softly and gratefully as dried mint falls upon pea-soup, did the tales of these Spanish boys about the rich strange island of Cuba fall upon my willing ear. I saw it in its golden prime, all sugar and spice, and redolent of coffee-berries and the most fragrant of cigars. I basked in the rich full light of the tropical sun. I saw the caballero gravely pacing on his Andalusian jennet; the lazy negro pausing as he cut the sugar-cane to suck the luscious tubes; the señora in her mantilla; the señorita with her fan. I revelled in a voluptuous dream of the torrid clime, where you ate fifteen oranges before breakfast, and a plateful of preserved cocoa-nut *at* breakfast; where you never failed to take a siesta in your hammock during the noontide heats; where full evening costume consisted of a suit of white linen, a Panama hat, and a guitar; and where, with any little circumspection, you might win the hundred thousand dollar prize in the lottery. I longed to go to Havana, or 'the Havannah,' as it was termed in our time. Who has not so longed to visit strange countries when he was young, and imaginative, and had no money? Byron's words used to drive us crazy to see Sestos, and Abydos, and Athens. *Anastasius, or the Memoirs of a Greek* — why does not some one republish that pearl of picaroon romance?—made us tremble with eagerness to see the Fanal of Constantinople and the Bagnio of

Smyrna; and, later in the day, Eothen sent us wild to catch a gazelle, and bathe in the Dead Sea, and read the *Quarterly Review* in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. I cannot say the same of *Gil Blas*. Unsurpassed as Le Sage's great work is, as a feat of story-telling, it is to me singularly deficient in local colour. The Robbers' Cave might be in Italy, or in England in the days of Robin Hood. The Archbishop of Granada might be resident at Barchester Towers. I know Doctor Sangrado. He lives in Bloomsbury. Now *Don Quixote*, on the contrary, is odorous of the real Spanish garlic from the first to the last page. But Don Quixote is not a boys' book, whatever you may say. It is a book for men.

Well, the great whirling teetotum of life spun round, and one day it fell, spent, athwart a spot on the map marked 'United States of America.' I packed up my bundle, and crossed the Atlantic; but with no more idea of visiting Havana than I have, at this present writing, of going to Afghanistan. I am not ashamed to confess that I had but a very dim notion indeed respecting the topographical relation in which New York stood towards the Island of Cuba. I think there must have been something wrong in the manner they taught boys geography in our time; it was too sectional; you were made to swallow Mercator's Projection in isolated scraps of puzzles; and if your eye wandered towards the Gulf of Mexico when it should have been intent on the Bay of Fundy, they boxed your ears. We used to learn all about

the West Indies, and Wilberforce, and Clarkson, and Granville Sharpe; but no stress was laid on the fact that Cuba, and St. Domingo, and St. Thomas, were likewise West India Islands; and they were never mentioned in connection with North America. I think Admiral Christopher Columbus, or the Spanish Consilio de las Indias, must take some of the blame in this matter. What on earth made them call those American, or rather Columbian islands, Indian ones? I have never surmounted the early perplexity which beset me on the subject, and to this day it is to me incomprehensible why the passage from Halifax to Bermuda should be such a short and easy one; you ought to go round the Cape, surely, to the Indies.

Round again went the teetotum, and the tip of its tiny staff pointed to the Southern Atlantic. 'Havana' was inscribed on the uppermost facet. Again I packed my bundles, and, taking passage in a United States mail steamer, sped past Charleston, the which luckless city General Gillmore was then actively engaged in warming with Greek fire, and which Northern preachers were cheerfully and charitably comparing every Sunday to Sodom and Gomorrah. On the third day we were close on the Gulf Stream, and the usual feat of parlour, or rather gangway magic, was performed by a boatswain's mate, who lowered a bucket of water over the side, and bade us plunge our hands into it. It was cold as ice. Twenty minutes afterwards he lowered the bucket again, drew up more water, and bade us dip. We did, and the water

was tepid, almost warm. There was an increase of thirty degrees in temperature, and we were in that stream which an irate American politician once threatened to dam up and divert from the shores of England, thus leaving us 'out in the cold,' and freezing perfidious Albion to the glacial mean of Spitzbergen.

Three times—I do not understand the mysteries of navigation—we crossed the Gulf Stream. We skirted the coast of Florida so closely that we could see the pines that made a grim horizon to that swampy shore—so closely, that you might almost fancy you could see Secession in arms shaking its fists at the Stars and Stripes we carried. All this country was, at the time to which I refer, a land tabooed and accursed in Northern eyes. It was the coast of a rebellious state. Below St. Augustines, half way between that and Key West, we saw the coral reefs and the Everglades. Coral reefs, I may observe, do not make so pretty a show on the coast of Florida as the material does, in the form of bracelets and earrings, in Mr. Phillips's windows in Cockspur-street. In fact, a prudent shipmaster keeps as far away from the coral reefs as he possibly can.

We should also have sighted Cape Florida Light and Carysfort Light; but the Confederates having carefully put the lights out, to favour blockade running and perplex their enemies as far as they could, it was rather ticklish navigation after sunset. However, it is but a few days' voyage from New York to

Cuba, and we had a tight ship and great confidence in our captain. Occasionally, when the look-out man signalled a sail, there was a slight exhibition of nervousness among the passengers. The loyal immediately assumed the stranger to be the Alabama—not yet scuttled by the Kearsage off Cherbourg—and indulged in dire forebodings that within two hours the steamer's chronometers would be ticking in the cabin of Captain Raphael Semmes, C.S.A., the ship burnt or bonded, and themselves carried off to some port in the White Sea or the Indian Archipelago, thence to find their way to their destination as best they could. The disloyal, of whom I am afraid we had a considerable proportion among our passengers, generally jumped at the conclusion that the speck on the horizon, momentarily growing larger, was a Yankee gunboat, specially detached from the blockading squadron to overhaul us. What sudden declarations there were of 'whole hog' Union sentiments!—what divings into state-roms, there presumably to make such little matters as revolvers, Confederate commissions, and rebel mail-bags, snug! The captain was a discreet man, Union to the backbone, but not inveterate against the opposite party. We had one passenger on board who, for all the privacy in which he kept, and the very large cloak in which he wrapped himself, was unmistakably, inside and out, Southern Greyback and Secesh. To this gentleman in political difficulties, I heard our worthy captain remark one morning, 'My Christian friend, I'll tell you what it is:

as soon as we get inside the Morro I should advise you to clear out of one of the starboard ports, and never stop running till we've got steam up again. The smell of Uncle Sam's mail-bags ain't good for you. It ain't, indeed.' The which, I take it, was very sensible, and at the same time very kind-hearted counsel.

All this time, while we were eating and drinking, and lounging and smoking, and dawdling over books and newspapers, and card-playing, and listening to the grand pianoforte in the saloon, which was exemplarily punished at least a dozen times a day by Mrs. Colonel Spankie and Miss Alexandra McStinger, lady passengers—and pretending that the time hung heavily on our hands, when, to tell the truth, sluggards as we were, we revelled in our laziness—there was going on all around us, and to a certain extent in our very selves, a curiously phenomenal process called Transformation. You have read poor Hawthorne's delicious book; you have read *Faust* (with an English 'crib';) you have seen Lucas Cranach's picture of the Fontaine de Jouvence in the Berlin gallery? Well, we and our surroundings had become transformed. I had left New York in the middle of January, and in the rigidest throes of a Northern winter. The snow lay thick in the streets. They were skating on the lake in the Central Park. There were midnight sleighing parties on the Bloomingdale-road. The steamers on the North river had frozen fringes on the water-lines of their hulls, like the callous raggedness thrown out from the ends of a fractured bone; and you could see the

very shapes of the ferry-boats' keels cut out in the quickly parting ice that gathered about the landing-place. I had left Pier No. Seventy-seven, bottom of I forget which street, swathed in furs and woollens, and shivering through all my wrappers. I heaped mountains of extraneous coverlets in my berth that night. It was not quite so cold next day. On the third it was positively mild. On the fourth morning, taking my ante-breakfast walk on deck, I remarked with astonishment that I was clad in a full suit of the very thinnest nankeen, and that I wore a very broad-brimmed straw hat. Nankeen white linen, or thin blue flannel, was the only wear among my fellow-passengers, and the ladies had become positive Zephyrs. The smallest children on board testified very conclusively indeed as to the weather having become warmer; by removing their apparel altogether, unless restrained by parents or nurses; and then I remembered that I had kicked off all the bed-clothes during the night, and had had troubled dreams bearing on iced cider-cup. We had all become Transformed. Where yesterday was a fire shovel, to-day was a fan. We looked no more on a gray angry wintry ocean, but on a summer sea. It seemed ten years ago since there had been any winter; and yet that was only the day before yesterday.

For four-and-twenty hours did we sigh and swelter, and complain of the intolerable heat, and yet think it the most delightful thing in the world. We dined at four o'clock, as usual; but the purser,

if he contracted for our meals, must have made rather a good thing of our repast that day. The first course was scarcely over, before seven-eighths of the diners rushed on deck to see the highlands of Cuba. Yonder, rather blue and indistinct as yet, was the Pan of Matanzas. That day we dined no more; but, there being a 'bar' on deck, forward, with a New England bar-keeper of many virtues and accomplishments in his profession, sundry cheerful spirits adjourned to his little caboose, and, with steadfast and smiling conviviality of countenance, did 'liquor up' on Bourbon and old Rye, till the Pan of Matanzas, to which we had come so close that it was clearly visible to the naked eye, must have been, to the convivialists, more indistinct than ever.

We were yet many miles from Havana; but by the help of strong opera-glasses, and lively conversation, and a glorious tropical sunset, they were the shortest miles I ever knew, by land or sea. Coasting along the northern shore of Cuba from Matanzas westward, by high hills and white houses which, without any intervening beach or sand, came right down to the water's edge, like the castle-crowned vine-hills of the Rhine, we sighted, just before sundown, the Morro Castle itself: a great mass of dun-coloured rock, and tower, and battlement, and steep, of which the various parts seem to have grown into one another, like the rocky convent of the Sagra di San Miguel, so that you could scarcely tell which was castle and which crag. From its

summit floats the flag of the Most Catholic Queen, blood-red and gold; and in front, and in the sea, like a tall grenadier on guard, stands the Morro Lighthouse. No Confeds have put *that* out. We pass between the Morro and a promontory called the Punta, and can see a harbour, forested with masts, and a city all glancing and twinkling with light. We revel in thoughts of landing; of abandoning our keys to a commissionnaire, and leaving the examination of our luggage until the morrow morning; of rushing to an hotel; of bathing and supping, and going to the Tacon Theatre, or eating ices at La Dominica, after the band had done playing on the Plaza de Armas. Bless you, we know all about Havana by this time. I seem to have been familiar with the place for years. Did not Dagger and Bodkin and eke Carving-knife tell me all about it? But the Captain of the Port of San Cristobal de la Habana is a great man—a very great man, under correction of the Captain-General Dulce, be it spoken—and his laws are stringent. The sunset gun has been fired; the last notes of the warning trumpets have died away from the ramparts. We are just permitted to snuggle into the outer harbour; but there is no landing for us until six A.M., and under the guns of the Morro we are bound to remain all night. A very few years ago, even this privilege would not have been granted us, and we should have been forced to turn our heads seaward, and anchor in the roads.

It was tantalising, certainly; but still it was

exceedingly pleasant, and no one felt inclined to grumble. It was something, at least, to know that the huge engines were at rest, and that we should hear their churning and grinding, their panting and trembling, no more, until, like Poor Jack in Dibdin's song, we 'went to sea again.' So all the call was for coffee and cigars; and we idled about the deck, and speculated on what might be going on in the innumerable tenements in which the lights, now dim, now bright, were shining. Then out came the moon, like a great phantom of greenish white, and spread her arms right over the city of Havana. We could make out the hoary towers of the cathedral, and the church where is the tomb of CHRISTOPHER COLOMBUS; we could see the long slanting shadows cast by the beetling guns of the Morro on the rubbled walls. Boats came and went on the glassy waters of the harbour. There were lights in the port-holes of the ships too. What was going on *there*, I wonder? Skipper drinking cold rum-and-water. First officer playing a quiet rubber with the surgeon, the supercargo, and dummy. Purser making up his accounts; foremast men drinking Sweethearts and Wives, in the round-house. Everybody glad that the voyage is over, save, perhaps, that poor Northern lady in the captain's state-room, propped up with pillows, affectionately tended by that little band of Sisters of Charity who are going to New Orleans, and who is dying of consumption. Even she, perchance, is grateful that the restless engines no longer moan and

labour, and that to-morrow she may land, and die in peace.

As 'good nights' and 'buenas noches' cross each other in the harbour, you begin to wish you could find a friend to take a second in 'All's well.' For the waning moon now deserts you, and only the twinkling lights shine out from the black masses of buildings. The lights, too, are growing fewer, and ever since you came into port—which was at about eight o'clock—you have heard from time to time gusts of wild martial music from the shore. These gusts, the captain tells you, are the strains of the military bands playing in the Plaza de Armas. Hark! a most tremendous crash! then what a quaint yet plaintive flow of melody. Is that a Seguidilla, or a Cubana, or one of the hundred variations of the Jota Aragonese? Now, comes another crash; the cymbals have it clearly; the bassoons have given out; 'tis the big drum that is making all the running; the cymbals are nowhere; bah, it is a dead heat, and the grosse caisse and the plated dishes come in together. Now, the sounds have changed their direction. The soldiers are marching home to their barracks. Now, the wild sounds grow fainter; now, they die away altogether, and Havana is left to silence and to me.

I walked the deck until long after the ship was wrapped in darkness—all save the illumined binnacles and my fellow deck-walkers' cigar-tips. It was not at all the kind of night for going to bed. It

was, the rather, a night on which to stroll and stroll, and indulge in the deleterious habit of smoking, and wonder how many broadsides from the guns of the Morro it would take to blow you out of the water, and try to remember one of the movements of the Jota Aragonese, and at last, softly stealing into the saloon, and quite disdaining state-room berth, to fling yourself on a couch, and dream till morning of Mr. Alcachofado and the three young Creoles of Turnham-green.

Hasta Mañana. In my next I will relate something cogent as to what 'Manana' means in this part of the world.

THE HUMOURS OF HAVANA.

The morning, you may be sure, did not find me a sluggard on my couch in the saloon. Never rose a lark, or a landscape-painter on his first sketching-tour in Wales, with more alacrity than did I from the steam-packet's scrubby velvet sofa. Early bird as I was, there had been even lighter sleepers; and the ship, above and below, was full of joyous life. During the few hours of darkness, too, that process of Transformation I lately spoke of had been making rapid progress. I had fallen to sleep, it is true, in Spanish waters, but in Anglo-Saxon company, but I woke up on board a caravel belonging to the Spanish Armada. The grave, sonorous, and dignified Castilian—noblest and most Romanesque of tongues—resounded on every side; and although the day wanted several hours of breakfast-time, the blue filmy fumes of the cigaritos were floating about the cabin like aromatic gossamer. The consumption of chocolate was immense. Only yesterday we had been content with an early morning cup of coffee; but chocolate is the sole recognised Spanish desayuno, or 'break-fast,' nor, with a glass of cold water and a cigarito afterwards, does it make you so very bilious.

Or is it that your liver becomes, on your entrance into these torrid climes, so utterly disorganised, that nothing can make you *more* bilious, save the yellow fever, which kills you? 'If in doubt, take a drink,' says the American proverb. You had better give chocolate the benefit of the doubt, and drink *that;* for although made so thick that a spoon will well-nigh stand upright in the cup, it is a most delicious and refreshing beverage. I noticed, too, that several of our transatlantic fellow-passengers, in compliment to the climate and the Spanish flag, had substituted chocolate for their habitual 'morning glory,' or cocktail; in fact, one gentleman, used to these latitudes, informed me that he had 'swore off' alcohol altogether, until when returning from New Orleans, whither he was bound, he should be north of Cape Florida again; 'and then,' he concluded, 'I guess I will change my breath, and nominate my p'ison,'—a prudent resolve, and one that Englishmen as well as Americans would do well to imitate in the tropics. Yellow Jack is a bitter foe, and swamp fever a fearsome scourge; but I will back Old Rye and brandy-pawnee to sweep off more Anglo-Saxons in a week, than the vomito or the fever will do in a month.

Tables and chairs covered with oranges—come from none could tell precisely where; but it seems to rain oranges in Havana—and the presence of sundry officials in suits of white linen or faint blue stripe, with huge Panama hats, helped to complete the idea of Transformation. Are you aware of the beauties of

a Panama hat? It is of fine straw—straw so fine and so exquisitely plaited, that it appears to be of one united glossy nature. It is as soft as silk, and as strong as chain-mail, and as elastic as caoutchouc. If you are caught in a shower of rain, and your Panama gets wet through, you have only to wring it out as though it were a towel, and hang it on your walking-stick to dry, and in a quarter of an hour it will have regained its pristine shape. The Spaniards declare that a Panama is shot-proof, and an infallible protection against sunstroke; but of these assertions I have my doubts. The life of a Panama hat may be measured by that of a raven. It is supposed never to wear out. At all events, there is a cunning hatter in New York, who, for ten dollars, will undertake to return to you, as good as new, a Panama which is twenty years old, and has been in the wars, and shipwrecked, and thrown into a lime-kiln, a tan-pit, and a bucket of tar. This peerless hat is not to be purchased at a mean price. It is the dearest head-gear manufactured. Red-skinned maidens have intoned whole cantos of Indian epics while they plaited and sewed together those minute circles of straw. A good Panama will stand you in from fifty to seventy-five pesos de oro—from ten to fifteen pounds sterling.

And now, on this first of tropical mornings, did the steamer's state-rooms give up their semi-dead. Whole families of Señoras and Señoritas made their appearance in shiny black and pink silks, and low mantillas, and pink stockings, and white satin shoes,

and colossal fans, ready for any amount of flirtation, serenade-hearing, and bull-fight witnessing. Where had those Señoras and Señoritas been for the last five days? On their backs, I trow, in their berths, screeching piteously when the steamer pitched; moaning dismally when she rolled; imbibing chlorodyne, cognac, tea, and other nostrums against sea-sickness, and calling upon many Saints. Our Lady de los Remedios might be the best to invoke under such circumstances, perchance.

There is an immensely stout old lady in violet-coloured satin, with a back-comb as high as the horn of Queen Philippa in old illuminations, a burnt-sienna countenance, a cavalry recruit's moustache, a bright green umbrella, and an oaken casket clasped with brass under one arm. This is the old lady, I apprehend, to whom the stewardess used to take in such tremendous rations of stewed beefsteak, fried bananas, and bottled ale every day at dinner-time. She suffered awfully. Her cries for 'Cerveza Inglesa' were incessant. She was troubled in her mind one afternoon, when we had a chopping sea on, and sent for one of the Sisters of Charity; but I am sorry to say that nurse and patient did not agree, and that the good sister was speedily dismissed with unhandsome epithets. Sister Egyptiaca being of Irish extraction, fresh from an orphanage in New York,—whence she was going, good little creature, in perfect peace and contentment, to risk her life in the fever-haunted wards of a New Orleans hospital—and speaking nothing but

English, and the old lady only talking Spanish, may have had something to do with their misunderstanding. However, the old lady is all right now. She is very voluble; she has given the steward a golden ducat; and he has kindled a match for her, and she has begun to smoke a cigarette. It is reported that the oaken casket with the brass clasps is full of diamonds. The stewardess says, she always kept it under her pillow during the voyage. She looks a rich old lady; comfortably quilted with ounces, moidores, and pieces of eight. I connect her in my mind with a huge sugar estate and teeming gangs of negroes. I would rather be her Overseer than her Slave, I think.

It is worthy of remark, as another element in the Transformation we have undergone, that our talk is now all of a metallic coinage. Five days ago, nobody had anything but greenbacks. The stewards won't look at greenbacks now. Five days ago, the passenger who had hoarded a silver dollar was quite a lion; he who had an English sovereign hanging to his watch-chain was made much of; and one thin, dry New Englander, who was absolutely the owner of an American gold double eagle—the handsomest coin in the world—kept it in a wash-leather case, like a watch; would only exhibit it on pressing solicitation; and, I am led to infer, made rather a good thing of it by taking the precious piece forward, and allowing the 'hands' to smell it at five cents a sniff. But what cared we for paper money now? Piles of gold suddenly made their appearance. Little bills for

stimulants were paid in five-dollar pieces bearing the effigy of Isabel Segunda. For the first time in my life I saw those numismatic parallels to Brobdingnag and Lilliput—to dignity and impudence—the gold dollar, which is about the size of an English silver penny, and the gold doubloon, or ounce, which, to the dazed and delighted eye of the possessor, looks as large as one of King Crœsus's chariot wheels, but is in reality about the diameter of a crown-piece, and is worth three pounds ten shillings sterling. They say Havana is the dearest city in the world; and I cannot help thinking that the costliness of living there is mostly due to the fact of the ounce being held to many intents and purposes the financial unit. It is the Creole sovereign. If you stay at a friend's country-house and his body-servant has valeted you, you give the man an ounce; if you bet on a cock-fight, you bet an ounce; if a bull-fighter has won your approbation, you send him an ounce; if the prima donna at the Tacon takes a benefit, you purchase a stall and pay an ounce—or as many ounces as your admiration for the prima donna prompts you to disburse. A whole lottery-ticket—an entiero, as it is called—costs an ounce. If you hire a volante and two horses for the day, the driver very coolly demands an ounce for his fare: in short, I should imagine that the only wild animal in Cuba must be the Ounce. 'I call that man a gentleman,' I once heard a German settler in Havana remark, 'who can afford to lose at monté or tressilio, every day of his life, four

or five ounces.' Four or five ounces! Ingots and goldbeaters' hammers! to what a Tom Tiddler's ground had I come!

I went on deck, where everything was noise, bustle, and Transformation, and where they seemed already to be taking in oranges, bananas, and cocoa-nuts, as a return cargo. The skipper only remained untransformed. He wore the same fluffy white hat, the same long-skirted bottle-green coat with the same blue-black velvet collar, and the same shepherd's-plaid trousers in which he had stood imposingly on the paddle-bridge of his ship, foot of pier Number Something, New York city, five days since. He had a heart of oak, this skipper of ours, and I believe was an excellent seaman and navigator; but I could never divest myself of the impression that he had been concerned in dry goods, or even a wooden nutmeg factory, before he had taken to going down to the sea in ships. He had made, I daresay, fifty trips to Cuba, but he couldn't speak Spanish yet. He pressed the doctor into his service, to act as interpreter in a slight dispute with the health officer. 'Ain't posted up in his lingo,' he unaffectedly remarked.

I looked over the side, and drank in a spectacle the most gloriously picturesque I had ever beheld. I have travelled a good deal; but there are many spots, even on the map of Europe, which to me are still *terra incognita.* I have never been to India. I have never been in Australia. Looking out upon the crowded port of Havana, I was reminded irresis-

tibly of the market-scene in *Masaniello*—the Morro Castle doing duty for Vesuvius. We were close upon a quay swarmed with sunburnt varlets in red nightcaps, in striped nightcaps, in broad flapping straw hats, and some with silken kerchiefs of gay colours twisted round their heads. Nearly all wore gaudy sashes round their loins. They were bare-armed and bare-legged: their shirts were open at the breast, and, if they had jackets, those garments hung loose upon their shoulders, or with the sleeves tied in a knot before them. Dark elf locks, black glittering eyes, earrings, and little dangling crosses round the neck; baskets of fish and baskets of fruit, crates of crockery, coops of poultry; cries of gratulation, welcome, derision, defiance, quarrels never ending in blows, general hubbub and confusion; and over all the hot, hot Sun and the cloudless vault of blue.

But the market-scene in *Masaniello* soon faded away to nothingness. Havana began to assert its own individuality. I saw a town whose houses were painted in all the colours of the rainbow. I saw long lines of gray and crumbling bastions, and curtains and ravelins built in old time by jealous Spanish viceroys, and which, I learned, not without pleasure, General Dulce, the then Captain-General, was beginning to demolish, to give the pent-up city of Havana elbow-room. From all these bastions and ravelins the morning drums and trumpets of the garrison were braying and rub-a-dubbing at the most alarming rate. The port seemed as full of shipping as the

Pool of London; and what scant show of blue water there was to spare was packed close as Cowes harbour at a regatta with the shore-boats. Pretty little skiffs they are, with a lateen sail, often decorated with a full-length portrait of San Cristobal, the patron saint of Havana, and with a gaily striped awning, aft. From where we lay was a good twenty minutes' row or sail to the custom-house. Were the Americans to gain possession of Cuba—a consummation which, for many reasons, is most devoutly to be wished, for they would be bound to commence their occupation by the abolition of slavery—they would have twenty piers built in the inner port in less than six months, and the passenger steamers would come quietly up to the pier-foot and discharge their passengers on the wharves without any boats at all; but this is not the Spanish way of doing business. 'Mañana,' they would answer, were this necessary reform pressed on their attention. The authorities are of opinion that the harbour boatmen have a right to live as well as other folks; so you are not allowed to proceed from your ship to the shore without the intermediary of a boatman, to whom you pay a dollar, and as much more as he can argue you out of. He never threatens, never is rude: his endeavours to obtain an additional four and twopence cannot even be called begging. He puts the case to you as one between man and man; he appeals to your sense of justice, your self-respect, your honour. You are a caballero; he is a caballero. This—here he rests on his oars a moment, or objur-

gates Pepe, his assistant, who is putting on too much sail—will at once lead you to accede to his demand. The name of the boat which conveyed me to the shore on this said morning was 'La Rectitud.' The boatman was a most unconscionable rogue; but there was something in the calm assumption of dignity in the name on the stern, which drew the dollars from us as though we had been two-years children. I am reminded that when I use the first person singular, I might with greater propriety use the plural; for in this trip to Havana I made one in a party of three. I had two genial travelling-companions, both fellow-countrymen, in whose mirthful fellowship I enjoyed to the full all the humours of Havana, and with one of whom I was destined to travel to a stranger and more distant land, of which, in process of time, I purpose to discourse. But, as these travelling companions happen to be alive and merry—as they will probably read these papers, and as one in the Old and the other in the New World are as well known as Charing Cross*—I feel that it would be impertinent to drag them into a rambling and fantastic narration, full of perverse conceits and most egregious fancies; and I hesitate, too, to veil them under thin pseudo-

* I may partially lift the veil as regards them, now. One of my travelling companions (alas), Don Eustaquio Barron, whom to know was to love, and whose princely hospitality I enjoyed during my stay in Mexico, is dead. Of mingled British and Spanish lineage—he used laughingly to say that he scarcely knew whether it was in English or in Spanish that he thought—his friends declared that he had Two Hearts, and that both were of gold. He was continually travelling about, doing kind and generous and noble things; and gentle and simple, rich and poor, alike bewailed his untimely death.

nyms or provoking dashes. Let me, then, the old Babbler, be solely responsible for all I put my egotism to: and as for any other travellers, not my immediate companions, whom I may touch upon, do you set them down as mere brain-worms, abstractions, and creatures of the imagination. Do you know that I was once most savagely handled by the *Affectionate Review* for having made an 'unmanly attack' on the character of a lady, in depicting the airiest shadow in the world of a harmless spinster, by name Miss Wapps, with whom I journeyed due north, as far as Cronstadt, sixteen years ago? To please critics of the affectionate school, all travellers should be blind, and deaf, and dumb, and should write their words in invisible ink, and publish them in coal-cellars.

I, then, Babbler, having, after many shouts, and with much loss of inward animal moisture, selected a boat from among upwards of fifty applicants, saw my luggage thereinto, and free pratique having been granted by the officer of health, was rowed to shore. I should not have minded that health-officer's boat as a conveyance, but for the thought that people whose business is mainly with the quarantine and the lazaretto usually carry about with them the seeds of the cholera or the yellow fever, and die thereof. It was a most luxurious shallop, with an awning striped crimson and white, a rich carpet, and cushioned benches. The crimson and gold banner of Spain, with the crown on, floated at the stern; and under the awning the health officer lolled at his ease, clad

in bright nankeen, a red cockade in his Panama, and smoking a very big paro. My passport, a document with a very big red seal, granted me by Mr. Archibald, her Majesty's Consul at New York, had been left with the purser on board the steamer, and would duly be transferred to the Havana police authorities. The journey to the shore is very picturesque, though somewhat tedious. One man rows; another attends to the sail; both are smoking and occasionally squabble; and you, the passenger, are expected to steer. If you happen to be totally unacquainted with that art and mystery, the possibility of your running foul of other craft in the port is not a very remote one; and sometimes, while the boatmen are quarrelling or singing a little duet about 'Juani-i-i-ta, la chi-i-i-quita!' the boat lets you know that she has something to say for herself, by heeling over and capsizing. But I believe no passenger in a shore-boat was ever known to be drowned before he had paid his fare; and if you steer badly, the helmsman in the next boat may be steering worse; and the two negatives make an affirmative, saying 'yes' to the question whether you are to get safe to the custom-house. I suppose there are persons who can steer by intuition. I know there are people who can drive mail phaetons, mix salad, and compose charades, without ever having been taught. It is a gift. One is born to it, as to roasting meat and playing the overture to *Semiramide* on the chin.

The custom-house was an apartment as big as

a barn—all the rooms in Havana are huge. The floor was intolerably dirty; but the roof was a magnificent open timber one: the timber being in solid beams of delightfully fragrant cedar. So you had the Augean Stables underneath, and Solomon's Palace in all its glory above—not an uncommon contrast in Cuba. The custom-house officers gave us very little trouble. I addressed the first gentleman with a cockade I met as 'Señor'—I should perhaps have called him 'Caballero'—begged a cigar light from him, and slipped a dollar into his hand. He opened one of my trunks, let a little tobacco-smoke into the orifice to fumigate it, and then dismissed me with a very low bow. Then I was handed to a little grated wicket, where another official, who was smoking so desperately that he sat, as it were, in the midst of a fleecy cloud, like one of Sir James Thornhill's allegories in the Painted Hall at Greenwich, asked me my name and country, and delivered to me a printed license to reside in Cuba for the space of three calendar months: which was very kind on his part, seeing that I only intended to remain in the island until the West India mail-packet came in from St. Thomas. This license cost a good deal of money, four or five dollars, I think; and I noticed that when the official had filled up the form, he was a very long time in sanding it from a small pepper-caster, and looked very hard at me. I know, from long experience, what being intently regarded by an official of the Latin race means, and so 'executed' myself

without delay. We parted the best of friends, and I was a dollar the poorer.

I was now free to proceed to an hotel; but this was much more easily said than done. In the first place, there were no public conveyances about, save the volantes, which are vehicles far too ethereal to carry heavy luggage; in the next, to find any tolerably comfortable hotel in Havana is a labour which, had it been imposed on Hercules, might have caused that strong man to be a little less conceited about his triumph over the Erymanthian boar and the eleven other difficulties. The wealthy and splendid city of Havana is worse off for hotels than any other in the civilised world. The Antilles, perhaps, cannot be held as belonging entirely to civilisation; but, as the 'Queen' of the Antilles, I think Havana might maintain at least one decent inn. There is an hotel in the Plaza Isabel Segunda, close to the Tacon Theatre, kept by M. Legrand, a Frenchman; but I had heard dismal reports as to its cleanliness, and it was situated, besides, beyond the walls, whereas I wanted to be near the Plaza de Armas and the sea. There is a very excellent boarding-house, clean, comfortable, and well appointed, kept by Mrs. Almé, an American lady; but her accommodation is limited, and her establishment is nearly always as 'complete' as a Parisian omnibus on a wet day. I have been told, also, that there is a slight drawback to the comfort you enjoy at Mrs. Almé's, in the fact of the house being the chosen resort of consumptive invalids

from the United States, who have fled from the asperity of the northern winter to the warmer sky of Cuba. But they are often in the penultimate stage of the disease when they land; they don't get better; and it is apt to spoil your dinner—so I was told—when, inquiring for your next neighbour of the day before, who talked so charmingly of the last opera, and so hopefully of the coming bull-fight, you are informed that he has been dead for some hours, and will be buried this sundown in the Potters' Field. You grow accustomed to this at last; for it may be said, without exaggeration, life in these regions of vomito and fever resembles life on board a man-o'-war in war-time. You are very merry with Jack and Tom overnight; and on the morrow Jack is 'knocked over,' and Tom 'loses the number of his mess,' and you say 'Poor Jack!' 'Poor Tom!' Their clothes are sold by auction before the mast, and you forget all about the sad occurrence.

With the exception of Legrand's and Mrs. Almé's, the inns of Havana are all very like what I should imagine the fondas and posadas of Old Spain, away from Madrid, to be. I had heard such dreadful stories about them, that, blinking the pulmonary drawback, I determined to try Mrs. Almé's. By this time, with the assistance of several willing and grinning negroes, who danced with delight at the gift of a very small silver coin—I never saw any copper money in Havana—my luggage had been piled on a machine closely resembling one of those

miniature drays in England, on which a very small barrel of beer is drawn by a very big horse, conducted by a very big man. The beast of draught was in this case a bullock, with a tremendous yoke, not over his shoulders, but right across his forehead. The poor animal certainly earned his bread by the sweat of his brow; and, to judge from his lean flanks and protruding bones, I should infer that the jerked beef he might furnish, subsequent to his demise, would be dear at threepence a pound. The conductor, who sat the horse side-saddle fashion, was a wrinkled old negro whose wool had turned white, and whose wicked old head—he was *such* a nasty-looking old man—was surmounted by a ragged straw hat. He was singing, of course, occasionally varying that recreation by skinning and gobbling the pulp of some oranges, of which he had a pocketful, and, on the whole, took things very easily. I presume he was a slave. I was bound to walk behind this sable drayman, for, although I might have taken a volante, was it not my duty to follow my luggage? And, but for an uncomfortable fancy that if I stepped on the dray and sat aside my trunk I should look like a traitor being drawn to execution at Tyburn on a sledge, I would have patronised that mode of locomotion.

There was no obtaining admission at Mrs. Almé's. Intending visitors had written for their rooms a month or six weeks in advance; and the mansion was as full of phthisis as a Ventnor lodging-house.

Next I tried the 'Fonda de America,' a few streets off. There was some room in that hotel, which was under the arcades of a crumbling old portal, not unlike the Covent-garden Piazzas, with the aroma of all the Spanish onions, leeks, and shallots of the adjoining market hanging about the staircase:—a despotism of garlic tempered by tobacco-smoke. The landlady was a German—fair, fat, and twenty-five, and was basking in a rocking-chair, enjoying the smoke and the smell of onions with apparently intense gusto. The perfume was almost like Fatherland. She had one huge apartment to let. It was not vacated yet; but the occupant, a French commercial traveller, who had seemingly just risen, and who was carefully oiling and curling himself before a glass, most courteously permitted me to inspect the room. He was quite affable, indeed, and was good enough to inform me that a packet I saw lying on a side-table contained some of the genuine Amaranthine soap of her Majesty Queen Victoria, patented and gold medalled at the Universal Exhibition of 1855, and that he was just then clearing through the custom-house eighteen cases of Bully's Toilet Vinegar. Ere I quitted his quarters, he likewise enounced the opinion that the island of Cuba was un fichu pays, and that the landlady of the Fonda de America was a Mégère. Heaven bless the Frenchman, wherever in the world's weary journey you find him! He is always easy, sprightly, confidential, and conversational. Bless him for his grimaces, his airy

philosophy, his harmless, naïve vanity. He is, with the exception of the Englishman, the best travelling comrade in the world; only, for an Englishman to speak to a stranger to whom he has not been introduced, the stranger must be in the cramp-stage of the cholera morbus, or on the point of having his brains blown out by robbers. Then, but then only, the Briton becomes own brother to the man he doesn't know. But the Frenchman waits for no such crisis.

There was room at the 'America,' but not for all of me. You will bear in mind that I was in triplicate; and so raw was I then to Hispano-American usages, that I imagined that a traveller with money in his pocket had a right to a bedroom to himself. I had yet to learn that our English word comrade is derived from three Spanish words—'camar a dos,' double-bedded lodgings. I took a bath at the America, for the good of the house and my own (the oftener you bathe before eating, and the more seldom afterwards, in the tropics, the better it will be for you); and then the dray, and I and the negro, who was a spiteful old man, and had lost his temper fearfully by this time, resumed our peregrinations. We tried, I think, at 'Los Dos Amigos,' 'La Reyna de Inglaterra,' 'La Corona de España,' and other hostelries; but the answer in all of them was 'no room,' or 'not room enough.' I was, for the nonce, El Señor 'Ferguson,' and not fated to lodge anywhere; and the negro sitting side-saddle on the bullock

began to spit and swear in Spanish, like an infuriated old cat.

But to me the time was not all lost. Far from it. I had begun to study the humours of Havana. The time had worn away, it was ten o'clock, and the city had burst into the full blaze of tropical life. The Anglo-Americans rail at Havana, because the streets are so narrow and so tortuous; but ah! from ten to four P.M., how grateful you are for narrow devious lanes, in lieu of broad staring thoroughfares! You have the inestimable blessing of Shade. Now and then you must take, perforce, a hot bath, and frizzle for a moment in the sunshine as you cross a plaza; or, turning a corner, the sun, suddenly espying you, cleverly shoots a ray at your head, which pierces your brain well-nigh as an arrow would: but you are soon in the shade again. The streets of Havana are perhaps as clean as those of most southern European towns. The principal sanitary inspectors are named Garlic and Tobacco-smoke. They are at least determined to keep the other stenches down. The roadway is littered and untidy, but who should complain of litter composed mainly of orange-peel, the rinds of pine-apples, cocoanut shells, fragments of melons, and exhausted Indian corn-cobs? I must go to Covent-garden again for a comparison. Don't you know that delightful litter between the grand avenue and the Old Hummums—I mean that spot where the orange-boxes are bursting, and the almonds are tumbling out of their sacks, and the Irish market-

women sit in the June afternoon shelling peas. The scene is untidy, but grand. I always think of the Garden of Eden run to seed, in consequence of the gardener, Adam, having been turned away for stealing apples.

There is but a ridiculous apology for a foot-pavement in these streets. The average width of the trottoir certainly does not exceed twelve inches. It is a kerbstone with nothing to curb. I have fancied this exiguity of path to be a deliberate device on the part of the municipality to keep up the practice of politeness in Havana, for of course, if you meet any one on the trottoir proceeding in a contrary direction to your own, you naturally step into the kennel to allow him to pass. You don't give him the wall, you give him the totality of the pavement. This hypothesis, I fear, however, is as fantastical as the one suggested, that the narrowness of the streets in Havana is also due to premeditation, and is designed to allow opposite neighbours to light their cigars from each other's weeds. Small as is the space between the houses, they preserve, nevertheless, a tolerably perpendicular elevation; whereas in the town of Algiers, which in the narrowness of its thoroughfares closely resembles Havana, the houses are built on the lean-to principle. Each story seems on the brink of toppling over; and at the roofs, opposite houses nearly kiss each other. I have heard that the Moorish architects adopted this style of construction from notions of economy. You see that all but the very narrowest

strip of sky *must* be shut out. Why? The heavens above are for ten hours out of the twenty-four one blazing basin of burnished copper. The Cubans, however, being wealthy, can afford to leave a wider space between their houses; but while the sun shines they shut him out with vast awnings of particoloured stuffs. This aspect of Havana would delight the heart of an Edgington. The populous part of the city is one huge marquee.

Ah, and how shady the shops are! There are some as dark as the purser's store-room in a cockpit. You enter them, not only to shop, but to bestow yourself in a rocking-chair, to nod, and to take, if you please, forty winks. The shopkeeper never dreams of disturbing you. He puts your nap in the bill; that is to say, he adds fifty per cent to the price of the articles you wish to purchase. Of course you beat him down. Your bargain for everything in Havana mayor o menor, wholesale or retail. The apothecary who sells you a blue pill expects an amicable little tussle over the price. What matter? It fills up the time; and unless you are concerned in sugar or coffee, you are sure to have plenty of time hanging on your hands. 'Are there no beggars at your gate? are there no poor about your lands?' the Poet Laureate might indignantly ask. Well, the poor are slaves, and are very fat and shiny, and seemingly well cared for (which does not in the least militate against slavery being a stupid, blundering, and accursed anachronism, of which the Spaniards themselves are

heartily sick), and as for the beggars, I never saw any in Havana; and, had I met one, I should certainly not have presumed to offer him less than a golden dollar.

The tradespeople seldom, if ever, put their names over their shop-fronts. They adopt signs instead—not painted or plastic ones as the Americans and the Germans do, but simply written inscriptions usually implying some ethical allusion. 'La Rectitud,' our old friend of the boat, is much patronised by the mercers; but that tradesman in the Calle O'Reilly must have had queer ideas of rectitude when he charged me seventy-five dollars for a dress professedly made of pina or pine-apple fibre, but which subsequently turned out to be a silk grenadine from Lyons, not worth three guineas. Then you have 'La Probidad,' 'La Integridad,' 'La Buena Fé,' 'La Consciencia'—all special favourites with the gentlemen of the narrow width and ell wand. Their signs are very pretty, but methinks they do profess too much. Some are simply arrogant, 'Todos mi elogian'—I am praised by everybody; 'Mi famo per l'Orbo vuela'—my fame is universal: these are over the cigar-shops. The photographer has a flourish about 'El Sol de Madrid' and 'El Rayo de Luz;' one studio went by the name of 'El Relampago'—the flash of lightning; and I never could refrain from laughing at the motto adopted by the proprietor of a shop for the sale of lucifer matches—'La Explosion.'

And now, if you please, picture these thread-my-

needle thoroughfares, not one of them a third so wide as Hanway-yard, shady to intensity, but yet rich in the tender tints of reflected light, and semitones stealing through the diaphanous awnings overhead, with here and there a burst, a splash, an 'explosion,' of positive light and colour—where the sun has found a joint in the armour of awning, and made play with his diamond dart; picture these lanes thronged from morning till night with sallow Spanish Creoles, in white linen and Panamas, and negroes and negresses gaudy, gaping, and grinning, according to the wont of our African brothers and sisters. Now and then a slouch-hatted, black-cassocked priest, now and then a demure Jesuit father; many soldiers in suits of 'seersucker,' a material resembling thin bed-ticking, straw hats, and red cockades; many itinerant vendors of oranges, lemonade, sugar-plums, and cigars, for though every third shop is a tobacconist's, there is a lively trade in cigars done in the streets. The narrowness of the foot-pavement affects you little. You may walk in the roadway without inconvenience. There is nothing to run over you save the bullock-drays, whose rate of speed rarely exceeds a mile an hour, and the pack-mules, which are so laden with fresh-cut Indian corn-stalks for fodder that only their noses and the tips of their tails are visible beneath their burdens, and they look like animated hayricks—and the volantes, which are so light and springy that they would scarcely crush the legs of a fly if their wheels passed over him.

I confess that these several and sundry humours of Havana were, when first I viewed them, subordinated to my intense desire to find an inn in which I could take mine ease; and I was on the point of desiring the old negro (who was frantic with rage by this time) to turn his bullock's head to the city gates and journey towards Legrand's, when the odour of a decidedly first-rate cuisine attracted me, and ultimately induced me to put up at an inn in the Calle del Obispo. To tell the truth, I wanted my breakfast, desperately.

HAVANA CIGARS.

SHE wakes. She is all alive. I have got my Muse fast at Florian's, on St. Mark's Place, Venice, and on a sumptuous summer night. The great full moon hangs over our heads, imminent, like the sign of the World Turned Upside Down. I have regaled my Muse with iced coffee and macaroons. She has even partaken of a bicchierino of maraschino. A 'bicchierino'—isn't it a dainty name for a dram? Then, rubbing my hands in uncharitable glee, to think that yonder white-jerkined Tedesco officers have nothing choicer to smoke than three-halfpenny 'Virginias'—the actual Virginia of their birth being, probably, the Terra di Lavoro, or the Island of Sardinia—I produce from that private case, which has hitherto eluded the lynx eyes of the German Zollverein, the Spanish Duana, and the Italian Dogana, a real cigar—a Regalia Britannica, 'Plor fina, Maduro: Havana, 1864.' My Muse lights up at once, and pours forth memory in clouds. You need not be in the least shocked at the idea of this young lady from Parnassus, otherwise a most decorous person, graduate of the Hyde-Park College, and who has been nursery-governess in a nobleman's family, in-

dulging in a cigar as big as a B.B. pencil, at ten o'clock at night, in front of a public coffee-house. Between ourselves be it mentioned, there are many ladies in Venice who are, to the full, as inveterate smokers as the ladies of Seville. My Muse, perhaps, is the only high-born dame who puffs in the open Piazza; but then, she is invisible to the vulgar, and an Immortal. You shall scarcely, however, take an evening airing in your gondola without observing numerous fair and graceful forms at their open windows, or in their balconies, enjoying, not the pretty puerility of the papelito, but the downright and athletic exercitation of the full-grown cigar. About sundown, on most evenings, our gondoliers row us from the Ponte de' Fuseri to the Giardini Pubblici. We strike the Grand Canal a little below the garden of the Palazzo Reale. At the left-hand corner of the canal from which we emerge there is a pretty little mansion, Venetian Gothic in style, and, for Venice, in excellent repair. It is precisely the little mansion which, if its bodily eradication, shipment to Liverpool, and removal to London, on the American system of rollers, was judged impossible, I should like to cause Mr. Barry, R.A., to build for me in Curzon-street, Mayfair; and then, with the title-deeds of the freehold in my strong-box, and the bins of my bijou house well ballasted with curious hocks and peculiar clarets, I would lead a chirping life, entertaining my friends, drinking even mine enemy's health, and wishing him better luck the next time he went out

stabbing. At a charming oriel window of this tiny palazzetto there is sure to be, about this sunset hour, a plump, jovial-looking little lady — very like the portraits of the Countess Guiccioli—and who is pulling at a cigar at least half an inch longer and stouter than my Regalia Britannica. I think the plump little lady smokes 'ambasciadores'—a kind of cigar which you hesitate about consuming habitually unless your income exceeds fifteen thousand a year. In about an hour after sunset we glide back from the Giardini towards the Rialto, and there, at the same oriel window, we are sure to find the same plump little lady pulling away as vigorously as ever at her weed. It is not, I am afraid, the same cigar. Even in an 'ambasciador' there are not more than forty-five minutes' steady and continuous smoking. It has grown dark by this time, and through the open casement I can see a delicious little salon with a frescoed ceiling, containing that 'copiosa quantità d' amoretti' which Cardinal Maurice, of Savoy, was so anxious that Albano, the painter, should supply him with. I see a chandelier, glittering with crystal pendents and wax-lights—the good old candles of *yellow* wax, not the meagre, bleached, half-hearted gentilities the chandlers sell us too often nowadays. I see walls with silken draperies, and choice pictures, and rare Venice mirrors, with frames like a whole horticultural show carved in gold. The furniture of the salon is of precisely the pattern I should wish Messrs. Jackson and Graham to send me into Curzon-

street:—sparing no expense, and asking no questions about settlement. I hope that the eyes which have thus dived into the penetralia of a Venetian dwelling-house are not impertinent. Where is the use of having pretty things, if you don't allow the world outside to admire them? *and are not all the really nice people who possess pretty things always ready to exhibit their treasures?* Finally, at the window of this enchanting chamber, amidst flowers in boxes and flowers in vases, and with a sprightly little Maltese dog snoozing in her sleeve, is the prettiest picture of all—the plump little lady, blowing her placid cloud:

'Se non son più Sovrana,
Son sempre Veneziana,'

she seems to be warbling between her whiffs, in that endearing dialect of the Adriatic which is as soft as crême à la vanille, and a great deal healthier.

I salute you, noble lady of Venice! Did I dare to launch into familiarity—did I presume to indulge in slang, I might say what I think—that you are a BRICK. In any case, I prefer you to Medora in her bower, to Mariana in the South, and to the Lady of Shalott. I would bow to you, Lady mine, were not bowing under the coved roof of a gondola almost as difficult a feat as bowing in bed. More than once the little lady has waved a smoke-spiral amicably towards me. There is a certain freemasonry among smokers. I am thinking that to-morrow evening I shall wave my handkerchief to her, when I am vio-

lently pulled back on to the cushions of the gondola, and the boatmen are instructed in a passionate feminine voice to row faster homewards. There is no harm, surely, in wishing to wave one's handkerchief to such a remarkably plump and jovial-looking little lady.

Yes, red-sashed boatman, even with my ears boxed, take me home; and then, when I have filled my inkhorn and nibbed my pen, take me, if you please, back to Havana. Never mind the heat. We shall be hotter before we are through this day's work. Never mind the dust. The sea-breeze will blow some time after gun-fire, and if you can exist unsmothered until then, you will be refreshed. Let us hail the first volante, whose dark and merry-faced postillion invites us to enter, and drive to the cigar manufactory, world famous, and unequalled in the world, perhaps, of 'La Hija de Cabaña y Carvajal.' For shortness, it is called 'Cabaña's.'

There is no longer a palpable Cabaña in the flesh. Firms remain, but partners pass away. Is there a Child? Is there a Fortnum, or, haply, a Mason? Is there a Chevet, or a Widow Clicquot? Did you ever see Swan and Edgar walking together? There has not been a Cramer for twenty years; and what contemporary man ever knew Boodle? The actual representative of the great Cuban house of Cabaña is the Señor Anselmo del Valle. I had had the advantage of a special introduction to this gentleman

at his retail establishment ere I visited his factory. The monarch of Nicotine sat enthroned among odoriferous cedar boxes and cigars yet more fragrant, serene and sweet-smelling, like an old Turk merchant in the Bezesteen among his shawls, and chibouks, and spices, and rose-attar. A lissom, dusky, oily-looking man, if I remember aright, with a lustrous, bush-like moustache, and who, reclining in a low chair, and in a full suit of white linen, was gently perspiring. The chief monarch of the great mosque of Araby the blest, this Señor Anselmo del Valle. What a halcyon existence! A mattress of lotus-hair —a continuous and diaphanous drapery of grateful incense hanging round. Nothing to do all day long save to loll in a rocking-chair, and take gold ounces in exchange for boxes of superfine Cabañas. For the cigar business is essentially a ready-money one. So many cigars as you make you can sell; and so many cigars as you sell do you get paid for, in Havana, on the nail. I have often thought that to be a brewer of pale ale at Burton-on-Trent must be the acmé of human felicity. You have only to go on brewing barrels of beer, and an ever-thirsty public will go on buying and paying. Dr. Johnson had an inkling of this, when, taking stock, as executor under Thrale's will, of the great brewhouse which was afterwards to become Barclay and Perkins's, he told Topham Beauclerk that he had at last discovered the 'source of boundless prosperity and inexhaustible riches.' When

I went to Havana, however, I was fain to place the vat in the second rank. The superlative degree I reserve for the cigar trade. 'Boundless prosperity and inexhaustible riches' are, in the case of a Cabaña or an Anselmo del Valle, associated with something even more productive of happiness. The cigar merchant can pass, at least, eighteen hours out of the twenty-four in the delicious occupation of smoking his own cigars. Now the Burton brewer, however fond he may be of the famous decoction of hops, malt, and the water of the Mendip Hills, fermented on the placid banks of Trent, can scarcely go on drinking his own pale ale all day long. Nature wouldn't stand it. The brain and stomach would alike revolt from this perpetual state of beer. As a rule, traders are averse from consuming their own wares. Some, sagacity warns off: others, satiety sickens. Your provincial innkeeper does not share with a very good grace, and with a chance guest, the bottle of red ink, logwood, and spirits of turpentine which he sells as claret, and charges ten and sixpence for. The grocer's apprentice soon grows tired of filching figs and munching raisins—ah! how nice they were when, as children, we were allowed to stone the plums for the Christmas pudding, and stole more than we stoned!—on the sly. The pastrycook's girl runs to the counter, indulges in a revel of patties and jam tarts; but in a fortnight she becomes palled, and a wilderness of sweets rarely invites

her to browse. It is different with the merchant who sells good cigars. He knows when he is well off, and makes the most of his opportunity. 'Carpe diem' is his motto, as it was that of the Regent Orleans. Heart-complaint, paralysis, liver-complaint, dyspepsia, cerebral disease in its thousand-and-one forms, may menace those who smoke too much; but the merchant knows when he has a good article on hand, and continues to smoke the choicest weeds in his stock. A cigar merchant who did not smoke seems to me quite as much of a monster as that French bibliomaniac of the eighteenth century, whom La Bruyère knew, who had a library of eighty thousand volumes, splendidly bound, and who confessed that he never read a book. 'I think,' says La Bruyère, in his mention of this person, 'that he only amassed volumes because he liked the smell of new leather. But why, then, didn't he turn tanner instead of bookworm?'

I have a distinct impression that after Señor Anselmo del Valle had squeezed my hand—he squeezed everybody's hand—on my being presented to him, he left in my palm a Cabaña regalia. They give away cigars in Cuba as they give away pinches of snuff elsewhere. I went into the back warehouse to choose a case of prensados for ordinary smoking, and the warehouseman gave me a handful just to try what their flavour might be like. These are among the 'obsequios.' When I got home to mine inn that

evening, I found even a more splendid 'obsequio' from the Cabaña factory, in the shape of a beautiful crystal casket framed in gilt bronze, inscribed with my name —'Caballero Ingles' being added as a dignity—and containing one hundred of the superlative cigars known as 'excepcionales.' These are said to be worth in England half-a-crown apiece, and are, indeed, only manufactured in order to be dispensed to crowned heads or presented as 'obsequios' to tourists. I am ashamed to say that—sentiments of gratitude apart—I would grudge sixpence for the best excepcionale that ever was made. Their mere fabrication is beyond compare. They are perfect convoluted cylinders of tobacco-leaf, mathematically symmetrical, showing not a join, a vein, or a pimple—with the broad end as round and smooth as that of a Cumberland pencil; with the narrow end as sharply blunt—a paradox, but a truth for all that—as the agate burnisher used for embossing diapers in illumination. I think that were you to throw an excepcionale into the midst of Westminster Hall, it would not break, nor lie, but the rather rebound, elastic, and come back to you at last, intact, but bent, boomerang fashion. Its defect is that it is a world too light—that is to say, too mild in flavour —and that, like all mild cigars, it is hot in the mouth. To the thorough smoker there is no more feverish tobacco than the lightest Latakia, and no cooler than the strongest Cavendish. Mild-tobacco smoking leads to drinking: witness the Turk, with his continually

replenished coffee-cup, and the German, who washes down the chopped-up haystacks which he crams into his pipkin of a pipe with innumerable mugs of beer. Not always innumerable. They count them sometimes. The Prussian guardsmen who were regaled at the Peace rejoicings at Berlin were limited to one bottle of wine and ten seidels of beer apiece. Ten seidels—ten mortal pints and a half of swipes in one October evening! It must ooze through their pores, and make them clammy.

From the hospitable retail establishment of the señor to his factory, or rather that of the Hija de Cabañas y Carvajal, is a drive of about twenty minutes. The Fabrica is a grandiose building of white stone, and of the architectural style which may be described as West Indian Doric: that is to say, with plenty of porticos, and columns, and vestibules, erected much more for the purpose of producing coolness than pictorial effect. There are at least a thousand operatives employed here; but the mere number of hands is no test of the importance of a cigar manufactory. At the huge Reale Fabrica de Tabacos, in Seville, over four thousand men and women, nearly half of them gipsies, find employment. The Regio, at Algiers, gives daily work to over fifteen hundred hands. The cigar factories of Bordeaux, Barcelona, Ancona, and Venice, are on a corresponding scale of magnitude; but please to bear in mind that the staple of the things made in the usines I have named is mere

muck, rubbish, refuse; whereas the Hija de Cabañas y Carvajal turns out only choice and fragrant rolls of superfine tobacco.

If anything could improve on the dreamy balminess which falls on the contemplative mind in these vast halls, all devoted to the treatment and preparation of tobacco, it would be the fact that the ceiling of every room is of cedar. 'Tis in the groves of Mount Lebanon, or, if you choose to be more prosaic, in an atmosphere of lead-pencils, that your weeds are made. I confess that ere I had been half an hour in the Cabaña factory I became immersed in a kind of happy fog or state of coma, such as ordinarily incited Messrs. Coleridge and De Quincey—in the good old days when it was thought no harm to crack a decanter full of laudanum before dinner—to literary composition. This must serve as my excuse for the very vague manner in which I am enabled to describe the process of making cigars. I know that I saw great bales and bundles of tobacco, just brought in from the plantations, being weighed in one long hall by negro women. The stuff was piled into monstrous scales, like those used in their dealings with the Indians who had furs to sell by the crafty traders in old Manhattan—who laid down the axiom that a Dutchman's foot weighed ten pounds, and popped their foot into the scale accordingly. I know that I subsequently saw tobacco in all stages of being cleaned, and picked, and sorted, the finer leaves being

reserved for the coverings or sheaths of the cigars, the less choice being used to form what magazine editors call 'padding,' and the Cubans themselves, when speaking of cigars, 'las tripas'—a term not quite translatable to genteel ears, but which I may render, in a guarded manner, as 'insides.' If you offer a Spaniard a cigar—not with a view that he should smoke, but that he should criticise it—he will, after expressing the preliminary wish that you may live a thousand years, produce a sharp penknife and slice the weed through diagonally. Then, with a strong magnifying-glass, he will scrutinise 'las tripas,' and tell you, as confidently as any Loudon or Linnæus could, the precise order of vegetation to which the cigar belongs—whether it is of the superfine 'vuelta de abajo,' the Clos Vougeot of Nicotia, or of some inferior growth, either from the island of Cuba itself, or from Hayti, or Porto Rico, or Virginia, or Maryland, or the Carolinas, or, haply, from the south and east of Europe; for vast quantities of Hungarian, Austrian, Sardinian, and Bessarabian tobacco do find their way to Cuba, and come back to us in the guise of prime Havanas—that is certain. A minute investigation of 'las tripas' may also lead to the painful disclosure that the cigar is not composed of tobacco at all. The periodical reports of her Majesty's commissioners of Inland Revenue point out, pretty plainly, what vile stuff is sometimes foisted on the public as genuine tobacco.

You run no risk, of course, of having a sophisticated cigar from the factory of the Hija de Cabaña y Carvajal. Their wares are of different qualities—just as claret is, and the quality perhaps takes as wide a range as Bordeaux takes between Medoc and Château Lafitte. But a Cabaña cigar—bought at Cabaña's, bien entendu, or at any reputable dealer's in London (no foreign cigar merchant I ever met with could be trusted even so far as I could see him)—is sure to be made of genuine tobacco. You are quite safe, also, with a cigar from the Partagas factory—and there are many amateurs who prefer Partagas to Cabañas; you are equally safe with an Alvarez; with a Cavargas; with a Lopez; with a Cealdos (of the Guipuzcoana manufactory), and especially with a Figaro. Some persons imagine the name of 'Figaro' to be that of a brand, or form of cigar, such as a 'Henry Clay' or a 'Londres;' but it is really that of a factory. I may mention our 'Lion' and 'Romford' breweries by way of analogy. I need not say that there are scores more respectable traders in Havana who make good and unadulterated cigars; but the names I have set down are those best known, and most popular with smokers.

On the broadest principle of classification, the cigars which are really brought from the Island of Cuba to Europe may be divided into three great groups. First, genuine Havanas, of various degrees of fineness, but, from stem to stern, sheath and 'tri-

pas,' made of tobacco grown, cured, and rolled in the Island of Cuba. Second, cigars composed inside of United States, or of European tobacco, imported into the island, but with an outside wrapper of Havana leaf. Third and last, cigars brought ready made into Havana, from Europe—mostly from Bremen and Switzerland—passed through some export house unfair enough to be an accomplice in such dealings, and re-exported to Europe. You rarely meet with these doubly sham cigars in England; but they form the staple of the article retailed at extravagant prices to travellers at continental hotels. They smoke so abominably that the consumer usually jumps at the conclusion that they are simply 'duffers,' with forged brands and labels on the boxes; but, if he imparts this assumption to the waiter, that functionary may in his turn often assume an air of injured innocence and virtuous indignation. He can tell the complainant the name of the wholesale dealer from whom he has purchased the cigars: nay, he is often enabled to point out on the box the actual government stamp, and the amount of duty paid on the contents as foreign cigars. I have gone down with a waiter to a custom-house and seen him clear from the ship and pay duty upon the cigars he has sold me, and yet have found them afterwards to be the merest rubbish. It is unjust to make Cuba responsible for the prevalence of such trash. The rubbishing cigars have been to Havana, but were not made there. What is it the

Bulbul, in the Persian poem, remarks relative to the rose? I think he observes that he is not that flower, but that he has lived near her. So Bremen, which has paid a flying visit to Havana, may be regarded as a kind of rascally Bulbul.

This species of fraud is too clumsy and too slow for the great English people. We, who are so very hard on the Americans for their 'smartness,' habitually resort in trade to perhaps the most ingenious swindles, the most impudent deceptions, and the meanest and most detestable 'dodges,' of any nation in the world. We adulterate everything. We forge everything. We would adulterate the mother earth which is thrown on our coffins when we are buried, if *that* fraud would pay. There is not a petty tobacconist's shop in a London back street without a stock of cigar boxes, whose brands, whose printed labels—down to the bluntness of the Spanish type and the poverty of the Spanish wood-engravings—are cool and literal forgeries of the Spanish originals. These brands and labels are forged quite as neatly as bank-notes are forged; but this is a 'trick of trade' which has not yet become felony. I have seen with my own eyes, in a great English town, and in a cigar factory employing three hundred men, the brands ready for heating and stamping—a kind of chamber of horrors—where there were no less than ninety different trade-marks purporting to be those of leading houses in Havana, and

all of which were false. The excuse of the people who resort to these wretched artifices is, that they vend the wares thus spuriously branded and labelled as 'British,' and not as 'foreign' cigars. What's in a name? they ask; and so they call a cabbage a Cabaña, just for the fun of the thing. But would it be fair, I may ask, to stamp the little figure of the 'perro,' or dog, which is the trade-mark of the real Toledo blade, on the haft of a carving-knife made at Liége, or to brand 'Moët et Chandon' on the cork of a bottle of cider? There are, doubtless, numbers of highly trustworthy cigar manufacturers in England, who make their cigars of the very best foreign tobacco that can be imported; but I must refer again to the reports of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue for some very ugly revelations made from time to time as to fines inflicted on manufacturers who adulterate their tobacco; and, in any case, the practice of marking the boxes which contain home-made cigars, even if they be of good tobacco, with the names and brands of celebrated Havana houses, is unfair, untradesmanlike, and immoral. I daresay, however, that I am but fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus in alluding to such matters, and that I shall get but scratches for my pains. Only, to unwary people who happen to be young and wealthy I will say *this:* whenever you have anything to do with cigars, or with sherry, or with pictures, or with horses, look out. Some advisers would include women and diamonds in their

caveat; but I halt at horses. They may have a flaw in them, but a woman is a woman, and a diamond a diamond, and you can tell paste at once.

A visit to Cabaña's manufactory, although it failed in enabling me to describe with terseness, combined with accuracy, the process of cigar-making, had at least one beneficial result in disabusing my mind of a variety of absurd stories which I, and I daresay a good many of those who read this paper, had heard regarding the process as pursued in the island of Cuba. To believe these legends, cigar-making is one of the nastiest, nay, the most revolting of handicrafts, and the manner in which the tobacco is rolled and shaped by imperfectly clad young ladies of the African race, and in a state of servitude, is, to say the least, shocking. There may be small manufacturers at Havana who own but two or three slaves, or employ but two or three workwomen, and they may do their work in a brutish and uncleanly manner; but so far as my own experience at the Hija de Cabañas y Carvajal's renders me a trustworthy witness, I may vouch for the scrupulous cleanliness and delicacy with which every single stage in the process of cigar-making is conducted. I have seen barley-sugar made, and I have seen bread made, and I certainly consider the manufacture of cigars to be a nicer transaction than either bread or sweetstuff making.

Nothing can be more orderly, more symmetrical, than the appearance of the cutting and shaping room.

The operators sit to their work, and make the cigars with their fingers, but do *not* roll them into shape by attrition on their sartorial muscles, as is popularly supposed. Every operator has his counter or desk, his sharp cutting tools, and his pot of gum for fastening the tips, with his stock of assorted tobacco-leaf in baskets by his side. It is a competitive vocation. The best workmen are best off. Payment is by results. Many of the hands employed are negro slaves, or were so when I was in Havana; but the finer cigars, the prime Cabañas, the Napoleones, the Excepcionales and Regalias are made exclusively by white Creole Spaniards, who are paid according to the number they can turn out a day, and many of whom realise very handsome wages.

Good cigars are very dear in Havana. You may get a weed for a penny or threehalfpence; or sometimes, by industriously rooting among the small manufacturers, you may pick up cigars very cheap indeed, which, if you throw them into a drawer, and allow them to season for six months, may turn out to be tolerable; but an approved and warranted cigar from a first-rate house will always fetch its price, and our heavy import duties notwithstanding, is not much cheaper in Havana than it is in England. I have appended in a foot-note (for fear of boring you)* the

* Napoleones di lujo, 300 dolls.; Excepcionales, 255 dolls.; Regalias, flor fina, 130 dolls.; Imperiales, 130 dolls.; Embajadores, flor fina, 120 dolls.; Esparteros, 100 dolls.; Regalias Chicas, 80 dolls.; Conchas, 80 dolls.;

price-list of Cabaña cigars for the year 1864. Since then the tariff has, I daresay, risen. I may add that it is generally understood in the cigar trade that the very finest and choicest qualities of Havana cigars go to England simply because the largest prices can be commanded there; yet I believe I am rather under than above the mark in stating that there are not thirty cigar dealers in London from whom fine and choice Havanas can be procured. It has been computed—although I have no official authority for the statement—that of the cigars manufactured by the Hija de Cabañas y Carvajal at least forty per cent go to England, thirty per cent to the United States—California taking the largest quantity—ten per cent to Brazil, five to Russia, five to France, five to Spain, two to Germany, two to Australia, leaving one per

---

Cilisedrados, 75 dolls.; Aromaticos, 75 dolls.; Comme-il-fauts, 70 dolls.; Cazadores, 65 dolls.; Pigmeos, 45 dolls.; Media Regalias, 60 dolls.; Londres flor fina, 55 dolls.; do. de calidad, 45 dolls.; Brioas o Punsados, 55 dolls.; Panalclos o Caballeros, 50 dolls.; Trabucos, 55 dolls.; Principes, 50 dolls.; Cabaña kings (one of the sweetest varieties of cigar extant), 35 dolls.; Medianos, 50 dolls.—all per thousand and in gold currency. Among miscellaneous cigars, the price of which per thousand may be computed at about five-and-twenty per cent under Cabañas, I find in my note-book, as to sizes, Trabucillos and Bajonetas, and as to brands and makes, 'El Principe de Galles,' 'Lincoln,' 'H. Upmann,' 'Los dos Hermanos' (the two brothers), 'Salvadores,' 'La Vida,' 'José Rodriguez,' 'Flor Cubañas las delicias,' 'Consuelos' (out of compliment to Madame George Sand, I presume), El aquila Parisiana (Bismarck's particular, it is to be imagined), Juan de Chinchuretta, Fleur de Marie, Flor de Manrico (an odd combination of souvenirs of the *Mysteries of Paris* and the *Trovatore*), Flores Tropicas, Yo soy un Angel (I am an angel, which is modest), La Fragrancia, La Dignidad, La Aprobacion, and La Flor de Eustaquio Barron. After pears, tulips, and race-horses, the nomenclature of cigars is certainly the most copious in art-manufacture.

cent for Italy and other fractional consumers of real cigars; and yet the Italians are the most inveterate smokers in Europe. They prefer, however, their own home-made Cavours, which are a halfpenny apiece and slowly poisonous, to the more wholesome but more expensive Cabaña.

I forgot to state that, before I left the Cabaña premises, I smoked and enjoyed very much a full-flavoured regalia, for whose structure I had myself selected the leaves, and which I saw rolled, shaped, gummed, and pointed, with my own eyes. It was like being at Joe's, in Finch-lane.

HAVANA CIGARITOS.

WHEREABOUTS, I wonder, did those wonderful literary gentlemen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who were in the habit of writing epic poems, and more amazing still, who persuaded people into reading them, keep the Muse whom they so frequently invoked? Did she stand at livery, with Pegasus, and the bird of Jove, and Juno's peacocks, and Phœbus's fiery steeds, and other curiosities of natural history, always ready to be trotted out when it occurred to the literary gentlemen that a Somethingiad in Twelve Cantos would be precisely the kind of thing to take the town, make the fortune of Mr. Osborn or Mr. Tonson, or extract a score of gold pieces from the Peer of the Realm and Patron of the Muses to whom the Somethingiad was to be dedicated? I want to know what that Muse did when she wasn't under process of invocation. It is my opinion that she was a lazy Muse; for we frequently find the literary gentlemen bidding her, with some sharpness, Arise, or Awake, or Tell, or Say something which, according to their divination, she had to communicate. She seems also to have been a Muse

who had something to give, and was worth flattering; since the literary gentlemen often addressed her by such endearing epithets as Gentle, Heavenly, Benign, and Discreet. But they never told anybody where the Muse lived, or how she was to be 'got at.' I fear she was to be heard of most frequently in the neighbourhood of Grub-street, at the sign of the Satchel, where the Greek translators lay three in a bed, and the gentleman who did Pindaric odes could only go out on Sundays through terror of the bailiffs, and the watchful landlady kept the ladder of the cockloft occupied by the Scholar and Divine who did High Church polemics for Mr. Lintot for half-a-crown a sheet. We have been told a vast deal within these latter days about the Curiosities, the Pursuits, the Amenities, the Miseries, of literature; but the polite world has yet much to learn concerning that Muse. Was her inspiration to be had for the paying for, and did she give credit? By the bye, she was sometimes called Coy, and I have heard her designated as Intrepid; but that was in a birthday ode about the battle of Dettingen. Her personal history, manners, and customs, are, however, shrouded in mystery. The sum of what the literary gentlemen have told us in her regard is this: that she played upon a Lyre, and resided on a Mount.

It is a very painful and humiliating thing to be fain to confess that, on the threshold of an article which will not contain one line of poetry, but will be of the very plainest prose on the very plainest of

subjects, I would give my ears to find a Muse who, for a reasonable consideration, would permit me to invoke her, and would inspire my Lay, and enable me to get to the end of it without committing five hundred blunders. Is there a Muse of Memory? I am afraid there is not: but it is a Muse of that kind I wish to apostrophise. And if I addressed her as Snuffy, or as Smoky, or even as Cloudy, I should be deemed either stupid or irreverent. Still, I desire no less than a Muse who is given to taking tobacco, a Muse who smokes a pipe, a Muse who can twist a cigarito; but chiefly a Muse who will make me remember things. It is my ardent wish to return once more to the island of Cuba, and to relate as much as I can call to mind about the famous cigars of Havana. I mentioned recently that I was a tee-totum. I have spun round most violently since I last took that liberty. Dear me! where *is* Havana and all my lore about cigars? My note-book is at the bottom of the Lake of Garda; and I know that I began an article on cigars, one morning, at Trieste, wrote the next paragraph at Milan, and cancelled both, as too digressional, at Samaden, in the canton of the Grisons. Just now, as I sit down despondingly, and wish I had attended the lectures of the professor who discourses on memory at the Royal Polytechnic Institution, the bells of Santa Maria della Salute at VENICE strike twelve at midnight, and my Muse, hitherto coy to churlishness, appears, and grants me all I wish. She is a nut-brown Muse — nay, darker

than the nut: as dark as chocolate. She is round, and smooth, and graceful, and is deliciously fragrant. I take her up very tenderly between my finger and thumb, and pressing her to my lips, bite off her nose. Then do I apply the flame of a waxen taper to her feet, and I begin to smoke my Muse. Straightway, in the spiral whirls of blue incense curling from my last cigar, the inspiration which I needed glides softly down upon me. Cuba comes back. The ghosts of a hundred memories start up, and drum cheerfully on the lids of rose-coloured coffins. Wars and rumours of wars, camps, cities, seas, storms, and sick-beds, all fade away, and here I am in the Calle del Teniente Rey at Havana, bargaining with a volante-driver to take me and a companion to the great tobacco-factory of La Honradez.

I remember it all. I went over the establishment, say only yesterday. First, we found out a dark counting-house in a darker street down town: both made artificially sombre by screens and curtains —for the sun was salamandering about with his usual ferocity outside — and sought Don Domingo. Most courteous of clerks in a Cuban banking-house was he. A tawny man with a close-cropped head of silver-gray, like an over-ripe orange slightly mildewed at top, his thews and sinews all dried in the sun, like South American dried beef, but given, like that under the action of warm water, to become quite soft and tender when you were admitted to his intimacy. Don Domingo was intimately acquainted

with the proprietors of La Honradez. To judge from the very high-dried odour which continually hung about him, he must have spent at La Honradez, himself, a handsome annual income in snuff and cigars. He gave us a Regalia apiece, to keep us in good spirits until we reached the factory, and then we picked our way through a maze of packing-cases and strong boxes, and reaching La Calle del Teniente Rey, bargained, as I have said, with a volante-driver, and were soon set down before the portal of which we were in quest.

I think the place had been, prior to the suppression of the monastic orders, a convent. It was large enough to have been that, or a barrack, or a penitentiary. The walls were amazingly thick; but the windows, few as they were in number, were neither so rare nor so thickly grated but that the odour of fresh-chopped tobacco came gushing through them, like telegraphic messages from the State of Virginia and the Vuelta de Abajo. Have you ever driven along the Paris Boulevards at very early morning? Have you ever noticed the fragrance issuing from the cafés on your line of route — the smell of the coffee roasting and grinding for the day's consumption? The garçons bring their mills on to the pavement, and from six to seven A.M. the Boulevards smell like Mincing Lane. Substitute tobacco for coffee, and you have the street savour of La Honradez. Penetrating into the great courtyard, the aroma became, perhaps, a trifle too forcible. It was

58799

as that, say, of the most delicate devil's dust thrown up by the sweetest shoddy mills. It was as though you were off some guano islands, the haunt only of birds of paradise. It is nevertheless certain that the air was laden with impalpable powder; that a sirocco of small-cut speedily filled your mouth, ears, and nostrils, and the pores of your skin; and that your first salutation to La Honradez was a violent fit of sneezing. The court-yard was full of broken boxes and the bañana-leaf or maize-straw wrappers of tobacco bales,—tobacco long since minced, and twisted, and smoked. There was an immense deal of litter and rubbish about; for, it must be owned, tidiness is not a thing you must expect to find in the tropics. There were also a number of the Sable Sons of Toil, and the Hapless Children of Bondage, lying about in attitudes suggestive to the artistic student of every conceivable variety of foreshortening. They were asleep, and dreaming, probably, of pumpkin. Slavery I hold to be the dreariest and most detestable of treadmills; but in Cuba the thralls doomed to the degrading discipline of the 'stepper' seem to be oftener off than on the wheel, and either exercise or the want of it has a tendency towards making them comfortably fat. As a rule, if at broad noonday you see a negro awake, he is Free. If asleep, he is a Slave.

At La Honradez only cigarettes, cigaritos, papelitos, or whatever else you choose to call the little rolls of tissue paper containing finely chopped smok-

ing tobacco, are made. The process is very simple; and we took the place only as a whet or relish before the more serious tobacco banquet which we were subsequently to enjoy at the great cigar manufactory of—Cabaña.

We passed through numbers of barn-like rooms, vast and dim, where, squatting on the floor in groups, negro men, women, and children were sorting the tobacco, stripping the leaves from the stalks, and arranging them in baskets for the chopping-mills. There exists a notion that any kind of tobacco is good enough to make cigaritos with, and that, on the principle said to be adopted in some sausage-making establishments, anything that comes near enough to the machine, be it beef, or pork, or a dog, or a cat, or a man, is forthwith sucked into the vortex, and converted into polonies or saveloys. This notion, so far as it regards cigaritos, is, I am happy to believe, groundless.

Very great care seemed to be taken in the assortment of the leaves and the selection of the prime parts; and I was assured that the paper cigars of La Honradez were made from the choicest Havana tobacco obtainable. They are, certainly, very delicious to smoke. La Honradez is, itself, modestly conscious of its own merits, and on the little chromo-lithographed wrappers which surround each bundle of twenty-five cigaritos you read this motto: 'Mis hechos mi justificaran'—'My works shall justify me.' Other factories are more self-laudatory and less

modest. 'Todos mi elogian'—'All praise me,' says one, on its wrappers. This may be true, only the establishment ought not to say so. 'Mi fame per l'orbe vuela'—'My fame is world-wide,' exclaims a third. This, again, is a little too self-asserting; for I would bet a reasonable number of gold ounces that my present respected reader never heard of that particular establishment for making cigaritos.

The paper cigars of Havana are not perfect cylinders, closed at one end with a dexterous twist, and provided at the other with a mouthpiece of twisted cardboard and a morsel of cotton wool to absorb the essential oil. Those are the famous Russian cigarettes, made at St. Petersburg or Moscow, of Turkish, Syrian, and Bessarabian tobacco. The Havana cigaritos consist mostly of so much finely-chopped tobacco placed in the middle of a little square of very thin paper, neatly rolled up into bâtons about an inch and a half long and an eighth of an inch thick, and closed at each end. The art of making them lies in there being just enough loose paper at the ends, but no more, to make the required twist, and in there being a perfectly homogeneous consistency of tobacco throughout the entire length. If the roll be too tight, or if, on the other hand, the tobacco be not evenly distributed, and it bulges in one part and is loose in another, the cigarito is useless. Indeed, it must be made with almost perfect nicety, to satisfy consumers: for almost every Spaniard has in his own

fingers an innate gift for twisting and rolling his own cigaritos. We have grown quite familiar, owing to the French 'sans nom' paper which, for a season or two, obtained immense vogue in Paris, with the tiny blank books from which leaves of tissue paper could be torn to serve as envelopes for the tobacco. Neither the French nor the Germans, however, ever attained great proficiency in this most difficult and delicate art. The Italians abominate cigaritos, preferring to smoke the more abominable cigars of native manufacture; and I think that the majority of Englishmen could more easily learn to curl hair or play on the mandolin—two arts in which they are never very likely to excel—than to roll cigarettes. To the Spaniard the trick comes naturally. He would roll up a papelito and twist it faultlessly, in a third-class carriage in the middle of the Box Tunnel. The old Spaniards, however, it must be owned, are the best hands, or rather the best digits, at papelito making. The tropics 'take it out' of a man, and the Creole Cuban is fain to allow his slaves to manufacture his cigars for him. Moreover, in Cuba, cigarettes are but a pastime. His real repast is in the Puros, or Havanas of the weed itself; whereas in Old Spain, genuine Havanas are, through the idiotic financial policy of the government, so difficult to obtain, and cigars of native manufacture are so execrable, that the Castilians smoke cigaritos in self-defence.

Picking, sorting, and chopping tobacco, and pack-

ing it up in the little squares of tissue paper, constitute only one section of the art cultivated at La Honradez. Some hundreds of young women and children, blacks, mulattoes, and quadroons, are employed in cutting and folding the paper, and in packing the cigarettes into bundles and gumming the wrappers. These wrappers themselves necessitate the maintenance of a very large chromo-lithographic establishment; and in an airy studio—the sun's rays, however, tempered by screens of white gauze—we found a number of Creole Spaniards at work, busily designing on stone the fantastic devices and pretty little vignettes, enveloped in which the far-famed cigaritos of La Honradez go forth to the world. The workmen who print these designs in colours, and manage a very elaborate steam lithographic press (made, as I deciphered from a cast-iron inscription, at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, United States), are a very odd kind of people indeed. They are not negroes, they are not mulattoes, they are not quadroons, still less are they criollos or Creole Cubans, or Peninsulares, that is to say, European Spaniards. They are not precisely Slaves; yet they cannot exactly be termed Free. There is one of these odd workmen perched on a high stool by the side of the machine, and intent on adjusting the pins to the due and proper register of one of the coloured wrappers. He is a limber-limbed young fellow, very thin, with very long slender fingers, the which, with patient deftness, he knows well how to use. His complexion

is of uniform pale saffron, of the texture of parchment, and he is perfectly beardless. He has very long lustrous black hair falling over his shoulders. In the centre of his countenance, which, in its yellow smoothness, does not ill resemble a boiled batter-pudding, show, like currants in the said pudding, a pair of little sharp black eyes. His forehead is very low, his cheek bones are very high, and about his lips there lingers continually a scarcely definable yet ineffable simper of complacent beatitude, due, perhaps, to an inward consciousness of merit, or to opium, or to sheer innate imbecility.

Where have you seen that parchment face, those eyes, that upturned calmly conceited smirk, before? On a tea-tray? On a tea-chest? On a fan? On a rice-paper view of the Porcelain Pagoda at Nankin? To whom, in fine, should those features and that complexion belong, but to a Brother of the Sun and Moon, a native of the Flowery Land, a native of the Celestial empire? They appertain, indeed, here to a Chinese coolie. Where, you may ask, are his shaven poll and his pig-tail? That question is easily answered. The coolies in Havana let their hair grow, and are soon persuaded to discard their umbrella hats, nankeen knickerbockers, and bamboo shoes, for the ordinary white linen habiliments of the West Indies. More than this, and, strange enough to say, they do frequently submit to be baptised, to change their Celestial designations for names taken from the Christian hagiology, and so become, to all outward appearance, very decent Ro-

man Catholics. Among Protestants, in California and Australia, the Chinaman clings most tenaciously to his native idolatry and his native customs, which are very nasty. He sticks to his pigtail, he sets up his joss-house, he burns perfumed paper to 'the gods of genteel morals,' he eats with chopsticks, and even imports dried ducks, and other culinary offal, from Canton or Chusan, to feed upon. But in Cuba, no sooner does he submit his queue to the barber's shear, and allow the priest to change his name from Kwang-Lew-Fung to José Maria, than he becomes at least as good a Christian as the negro: which is not saying much. To the end of the chapter, however, he remains essentially an odd fish. He is a capital workman, patient, cheerful, cunning, and industrious enough when he chooses; but he does not always choose, and is subject to capricious intervals of monkey-like laziness, and of a disposition to mutiny: always in a restless, spiteful, monkey-like manner. It is quite useless to reason with him, for he has his own notions of logic and his own code of ethics. By the law he cannot be flogged; but his masters sometimes take the law into their own hands. If he be thrashed, he goes out and commits suicide. He whose forefathers may have been over-civilised some thousands of years ago, and the negro, who seems never to have been civilised at all since the world began, are about the most hopelessly impracticable beings ever created to be the curse and despair of philanthropists and missionaries. The more honour, perhaps, to the courage

and devotion of the missionaries and philanthropists who persist in trying to reclaim the irreclaimable, and to wash the blackamoor white, and to take away the spots from the leopard. Brave hearts! May they go on trying, and never say die!

There are two hundred thousand of these coolies, it is said, in Cuba. The vast majority of them are 'up the country,' in the tobacco and sugar plantations. They are the substitute for slavery, as electroware is the substitute for silver. They are as difficult to keep in good order, and as generally unsatisfactory, as substitutes for anything are generally found, on trial, to be. In the towns they are employed to a considerable extent as mechanics and as cooks; in more than one private house I have found Chinese footmen and body-servants. They are said to be not unlike cats in their characters: necessary, harmless—till they are crossed—sharp, quiet, noiseless, contemplative, and very deceitful. There is a kind of jail or market for coolies at a place called El Corro, near Havana, and there they are sold—I mean, there 'contracts' can be made with their 'trustees' for their labour for a stated term. At El Corro you may see them in their native dress, and with their crowns shaven, all but a tuft on the top—the stumps of their departed tails. A coolie may be purchased or 'contracted' for, at a price varying between three and four hundred dollars. You are bound to pay the Chinaman you have bought four dollars per month, and to give him his victuals and two suits of clothes per year. For this he is bound

to you for eight years. The contract is put in writing before a juez de paz, and two copies are made, one in Chinese and the other in Spanish, to be kept respectively by the seller and the sold. The strongest guarantee for the Chinaman receiving decent treatment at the hands of his master is the almost certainty of the former's committing suicide if he be beaten. Why the Celestial, who, in his own country, has been weaned on a course of bamboo, and has 'eaten stick,' as the Arabs say, every day of his life, should so bitterly resent corporal punishment at the hands of the stranger, I am unable to explain. This, however, is the fact.

For my part, I thought the Chinaman had done very well to change his name from Kwang-Lew-Fung to José Maria, and let his hair grow, and sit on a high stool printing coloured labels. Chromo-lithography is one of the prettiest pursuits imaginable; and surely it was better to follow it here in peace, and with something like a hire for one's labour, than to be fishing for ducks from a barge on the Canton river, or painting miniatures on the coffin of your grandmother, against that respected person's decease, or addressing hieroglyphic compliments in Indian ink to 'the gods of genteel morals.' After all, the alcalde is preferable to the local mandarin, with his incessant bamboo.

We went to see the place where the coolie workmen of the Honradez were lodged. The dormitories were, for Cuba, wonderfully clean and airy; and under

proper discipline, I was told, the Chinaman could be made to observe extraordinary neatness and propriety. The beds, or bunks, were in tiers one above the other, as in a passenger steamer; but were much more spacious. Every coolie had his locker for his clothes, and a shelf for his platter, pannikin, and drinking-mug. Above every bunk was printed the name of its occupant. I read a most orthodox catalogue of José Marias, Andres, Augustins, Basilios, Benitos, Beltrans, Cristobals, Manuels, Eustaquios, Gils, Enriques, Jacobos, Pepes, Jaymes, Juans, Domingos, Lazaros, Mauricios, Pablos, Filipes, Rafaels, Estebans, Tadeos, Tomases, Vicentes, and Guillermos. There was one Esquilo, or Æschylus, and one Napoleone, who—the last—was described as the biggest rascal in the whole gang: the which reminded me that names very seldom suit their possessors, and that the only man I ever knew who had been christened Virgil was a most egregious donkey.

We were not allowed to leave La Honradez without an 'obsequio' or complimentary offering, and, according to the etiquette of Spanish politeness, this backshish was administered in the most delicate and artful manner. We were asked to sign our names and addresses in the visitors' book, and then, on some pretext or another, we were taken to a remote apartment. Just as we were quitting the establishment, and were thanking the superintendent for the great kindness and courtesy he had shown us, a coolie stepped forward, and, with a low bow and an inimitable simper,

presented each of our party with a packet of cigaritos, on whose labels, flourishing in chromo-lithography, were our Christian and surnames, printed at full length. The operation had been effected in about six minutes. It is certain that they have a very nice way of doing things in the West Indies and Mexico. Scarcely a day passed without somebody giving me something, and I came back to New York with a trunk full of 'obsequies.'

A COURT-YARD IN HAVANA.

I LEFT my unworthy self and worthier friends and my trunks, so far as I can recollect, just discharged from a bullock-dray at the Fonda called El Globo, in the Calle del Obispo—let us say Bishopsgate-street—Havana. Something like four months have elapsed since I found that anchorage, and, glad enough to be in any soundings, ordered breakfast. El Globo—not that Cuban inn, but the real rotund habitable globe—has gone round in the maddest of gyrations since I began to talk of the Humours of Havana. I have been much tossed about, and am brought very low. It was at Berlin, in a house overlooking the bridge which has the statues of Peace and Plenty, and over against the great gilded dome of that Schloss which the Kings of Prussia find so gloomy that they are afraid to live in it, and have fled to a pleasant modern palace under the Linden—it was there, beneath the darkling shadow of the Prussian Eagle's wings, that I penned the last paragraph of my last paper about the Queen of the Antilles. Then the world began to roll, and the teetotum to spin again. Just as I was stepping into a train bound for St. Petersburg, a civil person in uniform put into my hand a telegram containing these

simple words: 'Please go to Madrid. There is a Revolution in Spain.' The next night I was in Cologne; the morning after I was in Paris; at night I supped at Dijon; next morning I breakfasted at Bordeaux, and lunched at Irun; late in the evening a voice cried 'Valladolid,' and I had some chocolate; and the next day, the fourth, being Sunday, I got to Madrid, and (it being a great saint's day) was just in time to take a ticket in a raffle for Saint Anthony's pig—el santo cochinillo, as they call him. I must tell you about that pig, some day.

I put it to you, most forbearing of readers, how could I, being for the first time in my life in old Spain, take up at once the thread of my reminiscences of Spain the new? Had I striven to do so, the result would have been but a sadly tangled skein. My conscience pricked me sometimes, I admit. Once I had a most dolorous twinge; it was in an old library at Seville, and turning over a vellum-bound volume —*Marco Polo's Travels* I think—I came upon some marginal notes, written in Latin, and in a bold, honest hand. The old canon, who was my guide, reverently doffed his shovel-hat when the page full of marginal notes lay bare. 'They are worth ten thousand reals a letter,' quoth Don Basilio. 'Ten thousand! they are priceless. They are by the Great Admiral.' Yes, these were annotations to Marco Polo by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Of the authenticity of the autograph there was no doubt. The old library I speak of belonged to the Admiral's son,

a learned, valorous, virtuous man, like his sire, and to the chapter of Seville cathedral he bequeathed all his books. I say my conscience smote me. How had I lingered over the humours of that Havana which Columbus discovered! There is a picture of the Admiral hung up in the library; a picture painted by a Frenchman, and presented to the chapter by Louis Philippe, in exchange for a choice Murillo. Out of the canvas the mild eyes seemed to look on me reproachfully. I fancied the grave resolute lips moving, and that their speech ran: 'What are you doing here? Why don't you go back to Havana?' But it was no fault of mine. I was a teetotum; and to wheel about and turn about was my doom.

Coming out of that strange and fascinating land —the most comfortless and the most charming in the world—I sat down one day in the Frezzaria at Venice, and said, 'I really must go back to Havana.' So, taking hold of Old Spain, I cut its throat, and tied a Chubb's patent fireproof safe to its neck, and a couple of fifty-six pound shot to its legs, and, towing the corse out to the Lido, sank it just under the lee of the Armenian convent of St. Lazaro. It fell with a plash, and sank at once. 'Back to St. Mark's,' I cried to the gondolier; 'and lie there, Old Spain,' I continued, apostrophising two or three ripples which played above the deed that I had done, as though murder were a thing to laugh at—'lie there; and the fishes may feed on you till I need your bones, and dredge you up again.' Old bones have their uses.

Professor Liebig once stated that all Europe was ransacked to supply England with bones. I have marked the spot where my skeleton lies, full fathom five.

But I could not, somehow, go back to Havana. Cuba was coy. She floated in the air; she danced; she smiled at me, but she would not be embraced. Like unto those strange apparitions which mock the shepherd's sight on the Westmoreland fells, now seeming as the form of one that spurs his steed midway along a hill, desperate—now merging into a gorgeous train of cavaliers, with glittering armour and waving standards—and now fading into vaporous nothingness, I could see, remote, intangible, the Phantom of the Antilles; the burnished sun, the coral glowing beneath the dark blue water; the smooth black sharks waiting about the bathing-places, and raging at the walls of planks; the waving palms, the sanguinolent bananas, the orange and pine-apple groves of the rich island. But she would not approach me then. You cannot always make of your mind an indexed ledger which you can open at will, and, under the proper letter, at the proper page, and in the proper column, find the matter you want, set down with clerk-like accuracy, underruled with red, and ticked off with blue ink. There are seasons when you mislay the key of the ledger, or find the leaves blotted, the index blurred, the entries effaced. Sometimes the firm your transactions with which you are desirous of recalling has gone bankrupt, and the accounts are being unravelled by Messrs. Cole-

man, Turquand, and Young. Cuba, in short, would not come at call, and it was not until I embarked on the Adriatic, and went over to Trieste, whence, as you know, there are steamers starting continually for all parts of the world, that I began to feel a little tropical again, and find my Memory.

The sea air did me good, and once more I began to remember ocean voyages and hot climes. But out upon that capricious memory and the skittish tricks it served me! Like Leigh Hunt's pig, it went down 'all manner of streets,' always excepting the very one I wished it to enter. 'Softly now, old girl,' I whispered coaxingly, and strove to tickle it towards the Morro Castle. Would you believe it, the vicious jade bolted right across the Mediterranean Sea, into the port of Algiers, and took me to a cock-fight. 'Soho!' I said again, still trying soothing measures; 'this way, Memory, a little to the left; now to the right; now straight on, and hey for the Gulf of Mexico!' Alas! when I had got Memory in mid-Atlantic, she turned to the north instead of the south, bore me up the River St. Lawrence, and cast me on the stony marge of Cuagnawagha. By dint of herculean efforts I got the brute back to Vienna, in Austria; and, as luck would have it, hearing that a contingent of Austrian volunteers, bound to Mexico, was about to set sail, I hurried my Memory down to the coast, intending to leave her at Havana *en route* for Vera Cruz. At the eleventh hour a sharp note from Mr. Seward to Mr. Motley put a stop to the

embarkation of the contingent destined to help Maximilian, the imperial gentleman in difficulties; but my Memory managed to get on board a transport in despite of the American taboo; and after one of the shortest passages on record, brought up safely in the Fonda called El Globo, Bishopsgate-street, Havana.

They gave us a double-bedded room. Double-bedded! The apartment itself would have afforded ample quarters to five-and-twenty dragoons, horses, forage and all. It was very like a barn, and had an open timber roof, very massive, but very primitive in its framework. The beams, it is true, were of cedar, and smelt deliciously. I had no means of ascertaining the peculiar hue of the walls or of the floor, for beyond a narrow parallelogram of sunshine thrown on the latter, when the doors were open, the apartment was quite dark. It was one of a series surrounding the patio, or court-yard; and the Cuban architects hold that windows in rooms which do not look upon the street are mere superfluities. Their constant care, indeed, is not to let the daylight in, but to keep the sun out. The consequence is, that a room in a Cuban house is very like a photographic camera on a large scale. Magnify by twenty the pretty fresco-painted little dens which open out of the court-yard in the Pompeian house at the Crystal Palace, and you will have some idea of our double-bedded room at El Globo. By the bye, you must forget to sweep it, and you must be rather liberal in

your allowance of fleas. What matter? I daresay there were fleas in the house of the Tragic Poet, notwithstanding all the fine frescoes, and that the Pompeian housemaids were none too tidy.

I was told afterwards that I might consider myself very lucky not to find in this double-bedded room such additional trifles as a cow in one corner and a wheeled carriage in another. Spaniards, old or new, are but faintly averse from making a sleeping apartment of a stable or a coach-house. I was slow to believe this; and it was only lately, after some wayside experiences in Andalusia, and having shared a room with a pedlar's donkey, and being awakened in the morning by the hard, dry, sardonic see-saw of his horrible bray, that I realised to the fullest extent the strangeness of the bedfellows with which misery and the teetotum existence make us acquainted.

Of the altitude of the folding-doors leading into this cave there was no complaint possible. I came to the conclusion that El Globo had formerly been a menagerie, and our room the private apartment of the giraffe, who, it is well known, is a very proud animal, and will never submit to the humiliation of stooping. The tallness of the doors, however, was balanced by the shortness of the beds. My companion was a long way over six feet in height, and the ghost of the celebrated Procrustes might have eyed him as his very long limbs lay on that very short pallet, and longed to reform his tailor's bills

by snipping off some superfluous inches of his anatomy. As to *my* bed, it was as the couch of Dryden's Codrus—short, and hard, and miserable; the poet's bed, in fact, and a fit preparation for the flagstone, and the kennel, and the grave.

But the Procrustean eye couldn't have seen that long-limbed captain overhanging the short bed. Why? Because, when the folding-doors were shut, all, save a bright streak of sun or moonlight at their base, was utter darkness; and as soon as we kindled our wax-tapers at night the gnats or the moths, the bats or the scorpions, came and flapped the lights out. I don't know how the Cuban belles contrive to get through their toilettes. I think they must hang up screens of shawls in the patios, and come out into the open to beautify themselves. A Cuban bedroom is not a place whither you can retire to read or write letters. You may just stumble into it, feel your way to the bed, and, throwing yourself down, sleep as well as you can for the mosquitoes. Besides, the best part of your sleeping is done in Cuba out of your bedroom—in a hammock slung between the posts of a piazza, or on a mattress flung down anywhere in the shade, or in anybody's arm-chair, or in the dark corner of any café, or anywhere else where the sun is not, and you feel drowsy. In Algiers, the top of the house, with a sheet spread between two poles by way of awning, is still the favourite spot for an afternoon nap, as it was in the time of the Hebrew man of old; but in Havana the house-tops

slant, and are tiled, and so are left to their legitimate occupants, the cats.

Our folding-doors proved but a feeble barrier against the onslaughts of a horse belonging to the proprietor of El Globo, and whose proper stabling was in a cool grot, with a vaulted roof—a kind of compromise between an ice-house, a coal-hole, and a wine-cellar. This noble animal, seemingly under the impression that he lived at number five — *our* number — made such terrific play with his hoofs against our portals on the first night of our stay, that, remonstrating, we were promoted to a room up-stairs, windowless, of course, but the door of which opened on the covered gallery surrounding the patio. This dwelling, likewise, had the great advantage of not being plunged in Cimmerian darkness directly the door was closed, for it boasted a kind of hutch, or Judas-trap, in one of the panels, after the fashion of the apertures in the doors of police-cells, through which cautious inspectors periodically peep, to make sure that female disorderlies have not strangled themselves in their garters. You might look from this hutch, too, if you chose, and present to the outside spectator the counterpart of the infuriated old gentleman, presumably of usurious tendencies, in Rembrandt's picture, who thrusts his head through the casement, and grins at and exchanges savage glances with the young cavalier who has called to mention that he is unable to take up that little bill.

Never, in the course of my travels, did I light

upon such a droll hotel as El Globo. You paid about thirty shillings a day for accommodation which would have been dear at half-a-crown, but the balance was amply made up to you in fun. I had been living for months at the Bevoort House in New York, the most luxurious hotel, perhaps; in the world, and the change to almost complete barbarism was as amusing as it was wholesome. Amusing, for long-continued luxury is apt to become a very great bore—wholesome, because the discomfort of the Cuban hotels forms, after all, only an intermediate stage between the splendour of the States and the unmitigated savagery of Mexico and Spain. I was fated to go farther and fare worse than at El Globo. Our quarters there were slightly inferior to those to be found for fourpence in a lodging-house in St. Giles's; but I was destined to make subsequent acquaintance at Cordova, at Orizaba, at Puebla in America, and in Castile and in Andalusia in Europe, with other pigsties to which that Havana was palatial.

I am so glad that there was no room at Madame Alme's, and that we did not try Legrand's. I should have missed the sight of that patio at El Globo. It was open to the sky, of course; that is to say, the four white walls were canopied all day long by one patch of vivid ultramarine. A cloud was so rare, that when one came sailing over the expanse of blue, a sportsman might have taken it for a bird and risked a shot at it. I used often to think, leaning over the balusters of the gallery, how intolerable that bright

blue patch would become at last to a man cooped up between the four white walls of a southern prison; for suffering may be of all degrees, and anguish may wear all aspects. There is a cold hell as well as a hot one. I have seen the horrible coop under the leads of the Doge's palace at Venice, in which Silvio Pellico spent so many weary months. But he, at least, could see the roofs of the houses through his dungeon bars, and hear the gondoliers wrangling and jesting between the pillars, or uttering their weird cries of warning as they turned the corners of the canals. He could hear the splashing of the water as the buckets were let down into the wells in the court-yard by the Giant's Staircase, and sometimes, perhaps, a few of the historical pigeons would come wheeling up from the cornices of the Procuratie Vecchie, and look at him in his cell, pityingly. But only to gaze on four white burning walls, and a great patch of ultramarine, and the chains eating into your limbs all the while! Think of that. How the captive must long for the sky to be overcast, or for rain to fall—and it falls but once a year; and what a shriek of joy would come out of him were he to see, high aloft in the ultramarine, a real live balloon! Such burning white walls, such an intolerable patch of intense blue, must a prisoner by name Poerio have seen in Naples, in the old bad Bourbon time.

There was nothing prison-like about our patio, however. It was as full of life as our bedrooms were

full of fleas. The oddest court-yard!—the most antique—the most grotesque. I used to liken it to that pound into which Captain Boldwig's keepers wheeled Mr. Pickwick while he got into that sweet slumber produced by too much milk-punch. It was strewn with all manner of vegetable and pomicultural refuse, great leaves of plantains, cocoa-nut shells, decayed pine-apples, exhausted melons, and husks of Indian corn. Havana is a great place for oysters, and the four corners of the 'pound' were heaped high with votive offerings of shells. Nor to the pound was there wanting the traditional donkey. He would come strolling in three or four times a day, either bearing a pile of Indian corn about the size of an average hay-stack on his back, or with panniers full of oranges slung on either side of him. Occasionally a Pepe or a José, or some other criador, would come to unload him. Oftener he would unload himself, by rolling over on the ground, and tumbling his oranges about in all directions; then a fat negress would emerge from the kitchen and belabour him about the head with a ladle; then he would slink away to the cool grot where the horse lived, to confer with that animal as to any provender there might be about, and compare notes with him as to the growing depravity of mankind in general and Cuban costermongers in particular. By this time his master would arrive with a sharp stick, or else the big bloodhound that lived in an empty sugar-cask, and so zealously licked all the plates and dishes either immediately before or imme-

diately after they came from the table—I am not certain which—would become alive to the fact of there being a donkey in the camp, and 'run him out' incontinent.

How they managed to get rid of all those oranges I really do not know. I had a dozen or so brought me whenever I felt thirsty, and I daresay the other guests at El Globo were as often thirsty and as fond of oranges as I; and there were a good many too cut up in the course of the day for the purpose of making sangaree and orange-toddy; but even after these draughts the residue must have been enormous. You were never charged for oranges in the bill. They were as plentiful as acorns in a forest, and you might browse on them at will. In the streets, at every corner and under every archway, sits a negress who sells oranges, so they must have some monetary value, however infinitesimal; but if you bestow on her the smallest coin recognised by the Cuban currency you may fill your hands, your pockets, and your hat too, if you choose, with the golden fruit. When the Cuban goes to the bull-fight, he takes with him a mighty store of oranges tied up in a pocket-handkerchief, just as we, when boys, used to buy a pound of gingerbread-nuts, more as a precautionary measure than because we were sweet-toothed, on entering the confines of Greenwich Fair. Some of these oranges the amateur of the bull-fight eats; but the major part he uses as missiles, and pitches into the ring, at a cowardly bull or clumsy toreadores. There is positively a verb

in the Spanish dictionary signifying to pelt with oranges.

I mentioned the existence of a kitchen just now. It was a hot and grimy den, not much bigger than the stoke-hole of a locomotive; and there was a charcoal stove there, I presume; but the real culinary business was done in the patio. As to venture forth during the noonday or afternoon heats is considered next door to raving madness; and as you necessarily spend much time within doors; and as you feel too lazy to read, or write, or paint, or sew—what a blessing sewing-machines must be in Cuba! before their introduction most of the needlework was done by Coolies—and as you cannot be always smoking, or dozing, or sipping sangaree; and as billiards are out of the question, and as gambling—the real recreation in all tropical climes—is immoral, there are certain hours in the day when time is apt to hang heavy on your hands, and you don't know what the deuce to do with yourself. An infallible pastime to me was to lean over the gallery and watch the dinner being cooked in the patio. It has been said that a wise man should never enter his wife's dressing-room, and it has been likewise remarked that if we entered the kitchen of the Trois Frères half an hour before dinner, we should see such sickening sights as would cause us to lose all our appetite for the banquet served in the cabinet particulier up-stairs. We must look at results, says the sage, and not at the means employed to bring them about. But these sententious warnings should not

apply, I think, to the cooking that is done in a patio—in the open, and under the glorious sunshine. There was a rollicking, zingaro-like freedom in thus seeing your meals prepared in broad daylight. Why did they cook in the court-yard? Because the kitchen itself was too small, or because the gory sun came to the assistance of the charcoal embers and did half the cooking himself. I was told lately, and gravely too, at Seville—though the tale may be very likely one of the nature ordinarily told to travellers—that on the fourteenth day of July in every year there takes place in La Ciudad de las Maravillas an ancient and solemn ceremony in honour of Apollo—a kind of sun-worship, as it were: a culinary person, white-aproned and white-nightcapped, sets up a stall in La Plaza de la Magdalena, and produces a frying-pan, a cruse of oil, and a basket of eggs. Two of the eggs he breaks; sluices their golden yolks with oil, and then, with an invocation to the sun-god, holds the pan towards the meridian blaze. In forty-five seconds the eggs are fried. You must take these eggs, and the story too, with a grain of salt; but I can only repeat that Seville is a city of wonders, witness the two angelic sisters who, no later than the year 1848, sat on the weathercock of the Giralda, and spinning round and round while Espartero was bombarding the city, warded off the iron storm from the sacred fane.

Now, the sun of Andalusia, though a scorcher when considered from a European point of view, is a mere refrigerator when compared with the great fiery

furnace set up within the domains of the Southern Cross. I am not prepared to deny that the preparation of some of the stews we had for dinner might have been accelerated by the monstrous kitchen-range overhead; but I shrink from asserting as a positive fact that the old negress, who used to belabour the donkey with the ladle, fried her eggs in the sun. No, I will grant at once that her pots and pans were set upon little braziers full of hot ashes; but still, without the sun, I don't think her viands would have been cooked to her or our liking. She evidently gloried in the sun, and frizzled in it, bareheaded, while her eggs and sausages frizzled in their own persons. Not till her work was done would she bind her temples with the yellow bandana, or the gorgeous turban of flamingo hue, and, sitting down in a rocking-chair, fan herself with a dignified air, as though she were the Queen of Spain and had no legs. The oscillations of the chair, however, proved the contrary. She had legs which Mr. Daniel Lambert might have beheld, not unenvious. Good old black cook! She was like Sterne's foolish fat scullion dipped in a vat of Brunswick Black. She was gross and oily, and could exhibit a terrible temper, especially towards troublesome piccaninnies and refractory fowls who showed an ungrateful unreadiness in being caught and strangled and plucked, and trussed and broiled, and served hot with mushrooms, all under half an hour's time; but, her little irritation once over, she was—until a roving donkey called for the ministrations of

the ladle—all grins and chuckles and broad guffaws and humorous sayings. She would sing a fragment of a song, too, from time to time—a wild song of Congo sound, and which needed the accompaniment of a banjo. The refrain had some resemblance to the word ipecacuanha pronounced very rapidly and with a strong guttural accent, and yet I daresay it was all about love, and the home of her youth on the burning banks of Niger.

Where did all those piccaninnies come from? Who owned them? The landlord of El Globo was a bachelor; the waiters did not look like married men; and yet, from the youthful brood strewn about the patio, you might have fancied Brigham Young to be the proprietor of the place. 'Strewn about' is the only term to use with reference to the piccaninnies. Their age averaged between twenty and thirty months. Nobody nursed them; they were too small to stand; and so they sprawled, and crawled, and wriggled, and lay, and squalled, and kicked, and basked in the sun like little guinea-pigs. I have seen a piccaninny in a dish; I have seen a piccaninny in a wooden tray, like a leg of pork just delivered by the butcher. They were of all colours—blue-black, brown-black, chocolate, bistre, burnt sienna, raw sienna, cadmium yellow, and pale creole white. I am afraid all these piccaninnies, save those of the last-named hue, were Slaves, and the children of Slaves. Not one of the least suggestive—to some it may be one of the most painful—features of bondage is that free white and black slave children

grow up together in perfect amity and familiarity, are playmates, and foster-brothers and sisters. The great social gulf which is to yawn between them—so fair and jewelled with flowers on one side, so dark and hideous on the other—is in infancy quite bridged over. The black piccaninnies sprawl about the verandahs, and the court-yards, and the thresholds of the rooms of their owners; and the white piccaninnies sprawl in precisely the same manner. That fat old cook, for instance, made no more distinction between a white and a black urchin than between a black and a white fowl. Before ever she could address herself to the concoction of a dish, two ceremonies were gone through. A piccaninny had to be fed, and another piccaninny had to be 'spanked.' For the purpose of feeding, that invaluable ladle, dipped in a bowl of saffron-coloured porridge, came into play; the 'spanking' was done with her broad black hand. She was quite impartial, and distributed the slaps and the spoonfuls in strict accordance with the maxims of equity. Thus, if a piccaninny yelped, it was fed; but if it yelped *after* it was fed, it was spanked. And subsequent to both spooning and spanking, the fat old cook would catch the child up in her arms and sing to it a snatch of the famous song that ended with ipecacuanha.

So have I seen many dinners cooked. So I have seen my made-dish running about the patio with flapping wings and dismal 'grooping' noise, to be at last caught and sacrificed to the culinary deities, and to appear at the evening meal, grilled, with rich

brown sauce. And so at last the drama of the day would be played out; and coming home late, and leaning once more over the rails of the gallery, I would gaze then on the patio all flooded in moonlight of emerald green: pots and pans and plates and crates and baskets and braziers and vegetable rubbish, all glinting and glancing as though some fairy 'property-man' had tipped their edges with the green foil-paper of the playhouse.

THE VOLANTE.

ARE there any of us so high and mighty and wise and proud and philosophical as not to long for something? Until I read a novel called *Barchester Towers*, I never ventured to imagine that a being so ineffable as an English bishop could long for anything. Under the shovel-hat and silken apron, I thought, must dwell supreme indifference to the toys and gewgaws for which a grosser laity struggle and intrigue. Yet, what a delicate touch of the lancet between the under muscles of the human mind is that with which Mr. Trollope shows us poor little henpecked Dr. Proudie, in his grand palace at Barchester, longing, not for the see of Canterbury, not to be a second Wolsey or a new Ximenes, but merely to be able to write his sermons and sip his negus in a warm cosy large room above-stairs, from which he has been banished by his imperious bishopess. Yes; a bishop may long. A bishop! Who shall say that his Holiness the Pope has not coveted, within these latter years, the lot of one of his own flunkeys? It was in the disguise of a postillion that the poor old gentleman fled out of Rome in 1849. Quite feasible is it to surmise that his memory has oft reverted to

the day when he cracked his whip, and rose up and down in his saddle, mechanical, on the dusty road to Gaeta, and that, looking wearily on all his tiaras, and copes, and stoles, and peacocks' feathers, he has sighed, and thought that happiness might be found in an obscure post, good wages, a jacket with sugar-loaf buttons, and tight buckskin small-clothes.

We generally long for the thing which we are least likely ever to possess. The ugly woman longs for beauty. The drunkard, in his waking moments, longs for the firm tread, clear eye, and assured speech, of the temperate; and I have often conjectured that thieves are beset at times with a dreadful longing to become honest men. I was born to go afoot. When Fate condemned me to the footpath, she also presented me with a pair of bad legs; for Fate seldom does things by halves. The consequence is, that I have always been longing to ride in a carriage of my own. Of my own, mind. Let that you have be yours and nobody else's. I have longed for my own carriage this many a year, and have gazed so enviously intent on some of my acquaintance riding high horses or careering along in the chariots of the proud, that my toes have been menaced by their chargers' hoofs, and my last carriage has promised to be a stretcher to convey me to the hospital after being run over. My longings vehicular have been catholic, and perhaps a little capricious. In childhood I longed for the lord mayor's coach, so grand, so golden, so roomy. What

happiness was his who, with a fur porringer on his head, and a sword held bâton-wise, looked from that coach-window like Punch from a glorified show! There was a story related to my detriment during nonage, that I once expressed a longing for a mourning coach. I will own that the cumbrous sable wagon, so repulsive to most persons, exercises over me to this day a strange fascination, and that I have some difficulty in refraining from stealing down the stable-yards of funeral postmasters and peeping into the stuffy cloth caverns, and seeking for strange sights in the shining black panels, as the superstitious seek for apparitions in the drop of ink of the Egyptian magician, and wondering at the uncouth leather springs and braces, and watching the harnessing of the long-tailed round-barrelled Flemish steeds, with their obsolete surcingles and chestbands. The which leads me, with a blush, to admit that there may be some truth in the report that in youth 'my sister Emmeline and I' — her name was *not* Emmeline — were in the habit of performing funerals in the nursery, and playing at Mr. Shillibeer.

But these, and the glorious mail-coach, with the four thoroughbreds, and a guard and coachman in blazing scarlet and gold, and the bran-new harness and reins, which used to burst on our sight on the evening of the king's birthday long bygone — these were but childish longings, airy desires akin to that which children show for the Royal Arms on a shop-front, or the moon in a pail of water. Not until

manhood did I feel that full fierce longing, the longing which is mingled with discontent, and is own brother to envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. I have given the Drive in Hyde Park a wide berth, and have gone out of my way to avoid Long-acre. The sight of other people's carriages made me sick. I never owned so much as a one-horse chaise. I have not even a perambulator.

My longing has varied with the countries in which it has been my lot to long. I have longed for a droschky with a bearded Istvostchik in a braided caftan and a long-maned alezan from the Ukraine in the shafts. There is a droschky, I think, among the specimens of wheeled carriages in the Crystal Palace, but I never longed for an Istvostchik at Sydenham. I coveted the Russian vehicle only while I was on Russian soil. When I went away, I began to long for something else. Nor, I fear, shall I ever possess a droschky of even the humblest kind, which is nothing but a cloth-covered saddle, on which you sit astride, with splash-boards to protect you from the wheels; for in the latest edition of Murray I learn that droschkies are going out of fashion, and that the Petersburg railway stations are now beset by omnibuses and hack cabs. I never longed for an Irish outside car, although I have seen some pretty private ones; and crinoline may be displayed in its widest sense and to its greatest advantage on a 'kyar,' say between two and five in the afternoon, in Grafton-street, Dublin. My soul has often thirsted

for a private Hansom. What luxury in the knowledge that those high wheels, that stiff and shiny apron, all belong to you! I think I would have a looking-glass in the splash-board, in lieu of Mr. Mappin's proclamation of the goodness of his knives, and I am sure I should be always pushing open that trap in the roof and bidding the cabman drive faster. And I have longed for a mail phaeton—not so much for the sake of the two proud steppers and the trim lamps with their silvered reflectors, as for the sake of the two grooms who, in black tunics, cockaded hats, white neckcloths, and pickle-jar boots, sit in the dicky with their arms folded, like statues of Discipline and Obedience. I knew a gentleman in the city of Mexico, and he owned such a mail phaeton with two such statuesque grooms as I have described. Little did he reck, good hospitable man, that the guest he was wont to drive out in the Paseo de la Vega envied him, with a green and spotted jealousy, his mail phaeton and his trim grooms. He had encountered the most appalling difficulties before he could find two human beings who, even after long drilling and for liberal wages, could be induced to sit in the dicky —or is it the rumble?—and fold their arms without moving. The Mexicans are a very busy people; but neither the Spaniards, nor the half-castes, nor the Indians, understand sitting behind a horse. They prefer sitting across him. My friend sent to the United States for grooms. They returned him word that there were no grooms in the Union who would

fold their arms. A lawsuit took him to New York, and he had another mail phaeton built for the Central Park; but the grooms were still lacking. He tried Irishmen, and he tried negroes. Tempted by abundant dollars, they would consent to wear the cockaded hats and the pickle-jar boots, but they could not be brought to fold their arms. To attempt to subject a native American citizen to this indignity was, of course, out of the question. When I remark that I have seen a citizen clad in a red shirt and a white hat driving a hearse at a public funeral, you will recognise the impossibility of any statuesque arrangements in connection with mail phaetons in the States.

For any native Yankee carriage I never longed. I held the Noah's-ark cars on the street railways in horror, and considered the Broadway stages as abominations. As for a trotting 'wagon'—by which is meant a hard shelf on an iron framework between two immense wheels, to which a railway locomotive at high pressure, but disguised as a horse, has been harnessed—I never could appreciate the pleasure of being whirled along at the rate of about eighteen miles an hour, with the gravel thrown up by the wheels flying about you, now bombarding your eyes, and now peppering your cheeks. Thoroughly do I agree with the general criticism passed on trotting wagons by an old steamboat captain who had endured for a couple of hours the agony of the iron shelf. 'The darned thing,' he remarked, 'has got no bulwarks.'

There is rather a pretty American carriage called a Rockaway — not from any peculiar oscillatory motion it possesses, but from a watering-place hight Rockaway, where it was first brought into use. The Rockaway is in appearance something between the French panier à salade, in which the garçons de bureau of the Bank of France speed on their bill-collecting missions, and the spring cart of a fashionable London baker. Add to this a grinning negro coachman, with a very large silver or black-velvet band to a very tall hat, and the turn-out, you may imagine, is spruce and sparkling. But I never longed for a Rockaway. The American carriage-horses are the prettiest creatures imaginable out of a circus, and are as prettily harnessed. They are almost covered in summer with a gracefully fantastic netting, which keeps the flies from them.

Much less have I yearned for one of the Hungarian equipages, about which such a fuss is made in the Prater at Vienna. An open double or triple bodied rattle-trap, generally of a gaudy yellow, with two or four ragged spiteful profligate-looking little ponies, and the driver in a hybrid hussar costume— a feather in his cap, sky-blue tunic and pantaloons, much braiding, and Hessian boots with long tassels. This is the crack Hungarian equipage, the Magyar name of which I do not know, nor knowing could pronounce. The Viennese hold this turn-out to be, in the language of the mews, very 'down the road;' but it fails to excite my longing. Hungarian ponies

look wild and picturesque enough in Mr. Zeitter's pictures; but a gipsy's cart without the tilt is not precisely the thing for Hyde Park; and the 'proud Hungarian' on the box-seat reminds me too forcibly of the 'Everythingarian,' who in cosmopolitan sawdust continues the traditions of equitation handed down by the late Andrew Ducrow.

When, in the days of Donna Isabella, I was looking from a balcony, overhanging the Puerta del Sol, in Madrid, and used to hear, at about three in the afternoon, the clangour of trumpets from the guard-house, at the Casa de la Gobernacion opposite, as the carriages of the royal family, with their glittering escort, drove by to the Prado or the Retiro, I would question myself as to whether I felt any longing for the absolute possession of one of those stately equipages. I don't think I did. They were too showy and garish for my humble ambition. If a slight feeling of longing came over me, it was for the coach which conveyed the junior branches of the royal family. Imagine, if you please, a spacious conveyance all ablaze with heraldic achievements, and crammed to the roof with little infantes and infantas; Mr. Bumble on the coach-box; and the beadles of St. Clement's Danes, the ward of Portsoken, and the Fishmongers' Company, hung on behind, abreast—for long laced coats and huge laced cocked-hats are the only wear of flunkeydom in Spain. Harnessed to this astounding caravan were six very sleek, very fat, and very supercilious-looking mules. To the beadles before and the

beadles behind must be added the beadle of the Burlington Arcade, on the off-leader, as postillion. Yea, more. The beadle of the Royal Exchange trotted on an Andalusian barb as outrider. A squadron of lancers followed, to take care that the infantes and infantas were not naughty, or that the naughtier Progresistas didn't run away with them. On the whole, I don't think I longed much for this sumptuous equipage. There is another coach, in the royal stables at Madrid, much more in my line — a queer cumbrous, gloomy litter, with a boot as big as a midshipman's chest. It is a very old coach—the oldest, perhaps, extant, and nearly the first coach ever built, being the one in which Crazy Jane, Queen of Castile and Aragon, used to carry about the coffined body of her husband, Charles of Anjou.

There is yet another coach in my line—the Shillibeer line, I mean—which may be hired for a franc an hour at a certain city on the Adriatic sea, opposite Trieste. There are about four thousand of those coaches in the city—a very peculiar city, for the sea is in its broad and its narrow streets, and the seaweed clings to the door-steps of its palaces. How I have longed to have one of those coaches for my own private riding; say in the Surrey Canal or on the Serpentine! The Americans have got one in the lake in their Central Park; but the toy once placed there has been forgotten, and it is dropping to pieces. It is the only coach of which use is practicable in Venice. It is black, and shiny, and hearse-

like, and its roof bristles with funereal tufts, and the carving about its doors and panels is strictly of the undertaker's order of decoration. It is called a gondola.

But where would be the use of a gondola in London? The Surrey Canal is not in a fashionable district, and the Serpentine has no outlet. The chief purpose of your own carriage, I presume, is to drive about to the residences of your friends and acquaintances, and strike despair into their souls by flashing your liveries and appointments in their eyes. You could scarcely put your gondoliers into buckskins and pickle-jar boots, although, upon my word, I remarked once, at Venice, that the Count of Chambord, otherwise the Duke of Bordeaux, otherwise Henry the Fifth, King of France and Navarre—who lived, when he was not at Frohsdorff, at one of the most beautiful palaces on the Grand Canal, and kept half a dozen gondolas for his private recreation—had been absurd enough to dress up his boatmen in tail coats, gold-laced hats, plush breeches and gaiters. Truly, the Bourbons have learnt nothing, and forgotten nothing. Incongruity of incongruities! Imagine Jeames de la Pluche on the Grand Canal.

As one could not drive down to Ascot in a gondola, or take it to the Crystal Palace on a half-crown day, or keep it waiting for an hour and a half at the door of a Pall Mall club—and as the linkman at the Royal Italian Opera would be slightly astonished at having to proclaim that Mr. Anonymous's gondola

stopped the way, I must abandon all hopes of possessing a marine Shillibeer until I can afford to take a palace at Venice.

But, if my longings are not to be satisfied in Europe, there is in the Spanish West Indies a carriage to be longed for: ay, and the longing may be gratified at a very moderate expenditure. In the city of Havana, and in Havana alone, is to be found this turn-out. It is but a 'one-hoss shay;' but it is a chaise fit for princes and potentates to ride in. It is the queerest trap into which mortal ever mounted. It is unique and all but inimitable. Those who have visited Cuba will understand that I allude to the famous conveyance called THE VOLANTE.

The rooms looking on the street in Havana are necessarily provided with windows, but these casements are garnished with heavy ranges of iron bars, behind which you sit and smoke, or eat, or drink, or yawn, or flirt your fan, or transfix the male passers-by with dreamy, yet deadly, glances, precisely as your habits, or your sex, or the time of the day may prompt you. Skinny hands are often thrust between these bars; and voices cry to you in Creole Spanish to bestow alms for the sake of the Virgin and the Saints. Sometimes rude boys make faces at you through the gratings, or rattle a bamboo cane in discordant gamut over the bars, till you grow irritable, and begin to fancy that Havana is a zoological garden, in which the insiders and outsiders have changed places; that you have been shut up in the monkey-

house; and that the baboons are grimacing at you from the open. I was sitting at the grated window of El Globo's restaurant after breakfast, dallying with some preserved cocoa-nut, a most succulent 'goody,' and which is not unlike one of the spun-glass wigs they used to exhibit at the Soho Bazaar, dipped in glutinous syrup, when, across the field of vision bounded by the window-pane, there passed a negro, mounted on horseback. The animal was caparisoned in blinkers, and a collar, and many straps and bands, thickly bedight with silver ornaments : which I thought odd in the clothing of a saddle-horse. But it might be un costumbre del païs, I reflected; just such another custom as that of plaiting up the horse's tail very tightly, adorning it with ribbons, and tying the end to the saddle-bow. An absurd custom, and a cruel custom; for in the tropics the horse's tail was obviously given him for the purpose of whisking away the flies, which sorely torment him. The black man bestriding this tail-tied horse grinned at me as he rode by, touched his hat, and made a gesture as though of inquiry. That, also, I conjectured to be a Cuban custom. Those big placable unreasoning babies, called negroes, are always grinning and bowing, and endeavouring to conciliate the white man, whom they respect and fear, and love, too, after a fashion. This was a stately black man—a fellow of many inches, muscular, black as jet, and shiny. He wore a straw hat with a bright ribbon, a jacket of many colours, a scarlet vest, white breeches, very

high jack-boots—so at least they seemed to me—with long silver spurs, and large gold rings in his ears. He carried a short stocked whip, with a very long lash of many knots, and he rode in a high demi-peaked saddle, with Moorish stirrups, profusely decorated, like the harness, with silver. I could not quite make him out. The Postillion of Longjumeau, a picador from the bull-ring, Gambia in the *Slave* on horseback, struggled for mastery in his guise. He moved slowly across the window, and I saw him no more. I forgot all about this splendid spectre on horseback, and returned to my dalliance with the preserved cocoa-nut. Time passed. It might have been an hour, it might have been a minute, it might have been a couple of seconds—for the march of time is only appreciable in degree, and is dependent on circumstances—when, looking up from the cocoa-nut, I saw the plane of vision again darkened. Slowly, like the stag in a shooting-gallery, there came bobbing along a very small gig body, hung on very large C springs, and surmounted by an enormous hood. Stretched between the apron and the top of this hood, at an angle of forty-five degrees, was a kind of awning or tent of some sable material. Glancing between the hood and the awning, I saw a double pair of white-trousered legs, while at a considerable altitude above, two spirals of smoke were projected into the air. 'Surely,' I exclaimed, 'they can never be so cruel as to make their negro slaves draw carriages.' I rose from the table, and, standing close to the bars, gained a view of the street pave-

ment. But no toil-worn negro was visible, and, stranger to relate, no horse, only the gig body and a pair of wheels big enough to turn a paper mill, and a pair of long timber shafts, and a great gulf between. Mystery! Was it an automaton, or Hancock's steam-coach come to life again? Had my field of view been less confined, I might have discovered that there was, indeed, a horse between the shafts, but that he was a very long way off. He was the identical horse, in fact, ridden by the black postillion who had grinned at me. I had seen a Volante.

I became intimately acquainted with the volante ere I left Havana, and I learned to long for it. I have yet faint hopes of acclimatising it in Hyde Park. Some slight difficulty may be experienced in climbing into it, for the C springs are hung very high, and are apt to wag about somewhat wildly when the weight of one or two human bodies is pressed upon them. I would recommend a few weeks' practice in climbing into a hammock ere the volante is attempted; but the ascent is, after all, much more facile than that to the knife-board of a London omnibus. Once in the curricle, you are at your ease, and happy. You are rocked as in a cradle, and may slumber as peacefully as a baby; or, if you choose to keep awake, you may catch glimpses, between the canopy of the hood which screens the nape of your neck and the crown of your head, and the black linen awning which shelters your face and eyes from the blinding rays of the sun, of strips of life and move-

ment—foot-passengers, or riders in other volantes. To keep a gig was declared on a certain well-known occasion to be an undeniable proof of respectability. But, to ride in a gig drawn by a horse with a plaited tail and silver harness, and conducted by a postillion in a many-coloured jerkin and jack-boots, I consider to be the pinnacle of glory.

It behoves me to offer two brief explanations with regard to the black postillion's attire. When you come narrowly to inspect him, you discover that he is not entirely a man of truth. There is a spice of imposture about him. Those breeches and those boots are not wholly genuine. The first, you discover, are mere linen drawers, instead of leathers; indeed, to wear buckskins in the tropics would be a torture, the hint of whose possibility would have filled the hearts of the managing directors of the late Spanish Inquisition (unlimited) with gratitude. I could readily forgive the negro for his trifling fraud as regards the leathers, the exigencies of climate covering a multitude of sins; but what shall we say of a postillion who pretends to wear jack-boots which turn out to be nothing but stiff leather gaiters or spatterdashes? These hypocritical boots are truncated close to the ankle, even as was that boot converted by Corporal Trim into a mortar for the siege of Dendermond. At the ankle these boots do not even diverge into decent bluchers or homely shoes. The bare feet of the black man are visible; and on his bare heels and insteps are strapped the silver

spurs with their monstrous rowels. Now a jack-boot, I take it, is not a thing to be trifled with. It is either a boot or no boot. This volante appendage is a hybrid, and consequently abominable. The black postillion may urge, it is true, several pleas in abatement. First, nature has provided him with feet quite as black, as shiny, and as tough, as the extremities of any jack-boots that could be turned out by Mr. Hoby, Mr. Runciman, or any other purveyor to her Majesty's Household Cavalry brigade. Next, the Moorish stirrups into which he thrusts his feet are not mere open arches of steel, but capacious foot-cases—overshoes hung by straps to the saddle. Finally, negroes are said to suffer more than white people from the insidious attacks of a very noxious insect common in Havana—a vile little wretch who marries early, and digs a hole in the ball of your toe, in which he and his wife reside. Mrs. Insect lays I know not how many thousand eggs in the hole under your skin, and inflammation, ulceration, and all the other ations—even sometimes to mortification, the last ation of all—ensue. Pending the advent of a nice fleshy great toe, in which they can construct a habitation, the young couple dwell, after the manner of the little foxes, in any holes and corners that offer; and the toe of a jack-boot would present a very comfortable lodging until they moved. So the negro postillion sensibly cuts off the foot of his boot, and his enemy cannot lie perdu, awaiting him in a leathern cavern.

For this queer vehicle, the volante, I conceived a

violent longing; and one of these days I mean to have a specimen curricle neatly packed in haybands and brought to Southampton per West India mail steamer. A black postillion I might obtain through the friendly offices of the Freedman's Aid Society, and for money you can have silver-adorned harness made to any pattern in Long-acre. I am not quite certain whether the metropolitan police would thoroughly appreciate the inordinate length of the volante shafts, although in the case of a block in Cheapside the space intervening between the horse and the gig body would give impatient foot-passengers an opportunity to duck under and cross the street comfortably; and I don't know whether I should get into trouble with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, if I plaited my horse's tail up tight, and tied it to the saddle-bow, when summer heats were rife and flies were plentiful.

The volante! It is such a pretty name, too; and, Shakespeare's doubt notwithstanding, there is much in a name. Southey and Coleridge and Wordsworth were bent on establishing their Pantisocracy on the banks of the Susquehanna—not because they knew anything of the locality, but because Susquehanna was such a pretty name. It is a very ugly river, and, curiously enough, it is the home of a bird possessing at once the most delicious flavour and the most grotesque name imaginable—the canvas-back duck.

The Cubans have a genuine passion for the vo-

lante. Volantes are the common hack cabs of Havana; but then the horse is often but a sorry jade, and the negro postillion a ragged profligate 'cuss,' the state of whose apparel would have shocked Miss Tabitha Bramble, had she travelled so far as the Antilles. But the private volantes as far exceed the public ones in number as they do in splendour. Everybody who can afford it keeps a volante, and many who cannot afford it keep a volante. It is the one luxury, the one expense, which, next to a cigar and a bull-fight, is dearest to the Spanish Creole heart, and which, by fair means or foul, must be procured. I believe that the middle-class Cubans would sooner live on beans and cold water, dress in rags, and lie on straw like Margery Daw, than go without a volante. Fortunately, Providence has been very good to them. Their beautiful island runs over with fertility. All the world are eager to buy what they have to sell, and what almost exclusively they produce—sugar and tobacco. So they make huge piles of dollars and gold ounces, and are enabled not only to keep volantes in profusion, but to give capital dinners, and treat strangers with a generous hospitality very rarely shown in starched and stuck-up Europe.

We have all heard of the fondness which the Bedouin Arabs show for their horses. We know that the Prophet Mahomet has written whole chapters of the Koran on the breeding and rearing of colts. We know that the young Arab foal is brought up in the tent with the little girls and boys, and that when he

grows up to be a horse he is petted and caressed. The children hang about his neck and call him endearing names; the Arab mother strokes his nose and pats his cheek, fetches him sweet herbs, makes his bed, feeds him with bread and dates, and strips of meat cured in the sun. Well, the affection which the Arabs manifest for their horses the Cubans manifest for their volantes. They can scarcely endure that the beloved object should be out of their sight. Make an evening call—all fashionable calls in Cuba are made in the evening—and in a dim corner of the reception-parlour you will probably see a great pyramid covered up with brown holland. It is not a harp, it is not a grand pianoforte; it is a volante. I must hint that Cuban reception rooms are immensely large and lofty, and are always on the ground floor; otherwise I might be supposed to be availing myself too extensively of the traveller's privilege, in relating that the drawing-room of a Cuban lady is not unfrequently a coach-house as well.

A HARD ROAD TO TRAVEL.

It was part of the ineffable system of sweetness and light known as the wisdom of our ancestors, to whip all the children on the morning of Innocents' Day, 'in order that the memorial of Herod's murder might stick the closer.' The wisdom of our contemporaries, while it has discarded the brutal practice of annually reacting the Massacre of the Innocents on a secondary scale, still retains a trace of the disagreeable mediæval custom, in respect of the strict connection maintained in many households between Biblical study and afflictive punishment, and the intimate alliance between chapters from Jeremiah to be gotten by heart, and bread and water and dark cupboards. Who the philanthropic discoverer of child torture as a prelude to a church festival may have been, is uncertain; perhaps he was a near relative of the bright spirit who hit on the ingenious devices—to which the puddling of iron and the glazing of pottery are but trifling puerilities—of confining black beetles in walnut shells and binding them over the eyes of infants; or of that ardent lover of his species—connected with the educational profession—whose researches into the phenomena of

physical pain led him to the inestimable discovery that by boring a hole, or any number of holes, in a piece of wood with which a child's hand is struck, a corresponding number of blisters may be raised on the smitten palm.

Our good ancestors—can we ever be sufficiently grateful for the rack, or for the whirligig chair framed by medical wisdom for the treatment of acute mania!—blended the Innocents' Day custom with many of the observances of social life. If they were wicked, these ancestors of ours, they were at least waggish in their wickedness. If the boundaries of a parish or the limits of an estate needed accurate record, they laid down a boy on the ascertained frontiers, and flogged him so soundly that he never forgot where the parish of St. Verges ended, or where that of St. Brooms began. Fifty years afterwards, if he were summoned as a witness at Nisi Prius, he would relate, quickened by the memory of his stripes, every topographical condition of the limits under discussion. The phantom of this sportive mode of combining cruelty with land-surveying yet survives in the annual outings of charity children to 'beat the bounds.' Formerly the charity boys, and not the bounds, were beaten; but now even the long willow wands with which bricks and mortar are castigated are falling into desuetude, and although the ceremony is still kept up in some parishes—the rector in his black gown and a chimney-pot hat, and bearing a large nosegay in his hand, being a sight to

see—it is feared that beating the bounds will, in a few years, be wholly abolished, owing to the gradual but sure extinction of Beadles, as a race. Another vestige of what may be called Innocenticism lingered until recently in certain pleasant municipal excursions termed 'swanhoppings,' when some corpulent gentlemen, with a considerable quantity of lobster salad and champagne beneath their waistcoats, were sportively seized upon by the watermen of the Lord Mayor's barge, and 'bumped' on posts or rounded blocks of stone. The solemn usage had some reference, it is to be presumed, to the liberties of the City, as guaranteed by the charter given by William the King to William the bishop, and Godfrey the portreeve. Or it might obscurely have related to the Conservancy of the Thames. Substantially, it meant half-a-crown to the Lord Mayor's watermen.

In the south of France, there may be found growing, all the year round, as fine a crop of ignorance and fanaticism as the sturdiest Conservative might wish to look upon. The populace of Toulouse would hang the whole Calas family again to-morrow if they had a chance. The present writer was all but stoned once at Toulon for not going down on his knees in the street, in honour of the passage of an absurd little joss, preceded by a brass band, a drum-major, a battalion of the line, and a whole legion of priests. The country people still thrash their children mercilessly whenever a gang of convicts go by on their way to the bagne, and especially

on the morning of the execution of a criminal. And it is a consolation to arrive at the conclusion, from patent and visible facts, that wherever wisdom, in its Ancestral form, triumphantly flourishes, there dirt, sloth, ignorance, superstition, fever, pestilence, and recurring famines, do most strongly flourish too.

It may seem strange to the reader that, after venturing upon these uncomplimentary comments on our forefathers' sagacity, the writer should candidly proceed to own his belief that the human memory *may* be materially strengthened as to facts and dates, by the impressions of bodily anguish suffered concurrently with a particular day, or a particular event. Such, however, is the fact, although of course it cannot be accepted as a plea in extenuation of the most barbarous cruelty. For example, if the next time a tramp sought hospitality at the Guildford union, the guardians forthwith seized upon such tramp, and caused him to be branded with a hot iron from head to foot, and in Roman capitals, with the words, 'The guardians of the Guildford union refuse to relieve the Casual Poor,' the stigmatised vagrant would, to the day of his death, remember that Guildford union workhouse was not a place whereat bed and breakfast should be asked for. Still there is no combating the fact that the remembrances of agony are lasting. I have a very indistinct recollection of things which took place twenty, or even ten years ago; and I often ask myself with amazement whether it is possible that I could ever have written such and such a

letter, or known such a man or woman. Yet with microscopic minuteness, I can recall a yellow hackney-coach—the driver had a carbuncle on the left side of his nose—which, once upon a time, conveyed my nurse and myself to the residence of a fashionable dentist in Old Cavendish-street, London. I can remember the black footman who opened the door, and the fiendish manner in which he grinned, as though to show that *his* molars needed no dentistry. I can remember the dog's-eared copy of the Belle-Assemblée on the waiting-room table; the widow lady with her face tied up, moaning by the window; the choleric old gentleman in nankeen trousers who swore terrifically because he was kept waiting; the frayed and threadbare edges of the green baize door leading to the dentist's torture chamber; the strong smell of cloves and spirits of wine and warm wax, about; the dentist himself—his white neckcloth and shining bald head; his horrible apparatus; his more horrible morocco-covered chair; the drip, drip of water at the washstand; the sympathising looks of my nurse; the deadly dew of terror that started from my pores as the Monster seized me; and finally, that one appalling circular wrench, as though some huge bear with red hot jaws—he has favoured us all, in dreams—were biting my head off, and found my cervical vertebræ troublesome: all these come back to me, palpably. Yet I had that tooth out eight-and-thirty years ago.

A hard road to travel! I should have forgotten

all about *that* road by this time but for the intolerable pain I endured when I was travelling upon it. I have crossed Mont Cenis a dozen times, yet I should be puzzled to point out the principal portions of the landscape to a stranger. I could not repeat, without book, the names of the Rhine castles between Cologne and Mayence. I am sure I don't know how many stations there are between London and Brighton. And I am not by any means 'letter' or 'figure perfect' in the multiplication table, although the road up to nine times eight was in my time about as hard travelling as could be gone through by a boy with a skin not quite so thick as that of a rhinoceros. But every inch of the hard road I happened to travel in the spring of 1864—a road which stretches for some three hundred miles from the city of Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico—is indelibly impressed on my memory. Since then I have journeyed many thousands of miles over roads of more or less duresse; and in the Tyrol, in Venetia, in Spain, in Algeria, I have often tested by sudden inward query the tenacity remaining in the reminiscence of that road in Mexico. You turn to the right from the great quay of Vera Cruz, passing the castle of San Juan de Ulloa. You drive to a wretched railway station, and take the train (I am speaking of 1864) to a place called La Soledad, some five-and-twenty miles inland. There you sleep. Next morning at daybreak you start in a carriage along the great Spanish highway, and by nightfall make Cordova. At four on

the following morning you drive to Orizaba—you are taking things quietly, mind, in consequence of the road—and pass the day there. Again on the morrow you start at four A.M. from Cordova for Sant' Augustin del Palmar, where you dine and sleep. The next day's journey brings you, by sunset, to Puebla. The next day you make Rio Frio, in time for breakfast, and at about five in the afternoon you pass the Garita, or customs-barrier, and are in the city of Montezuma, the capital of Mexico. That is the road. I spent, going up, six days on the journey; but I was an inmate of a private carriage. I came down again in a public diligence, in three days; but, for reasons I shall explain afterwards, the agony of the private travelling carriage far surpassed that of the stage-coach.

Ostensibly I had no reason for grumbling. I was the guest of a kind friend whose carriage had been built in New York, with a special view to Mexican highways, and who, being a great friend and patron of the contractor for the Imperial Diligences—Mexico was an empire in '64—was certain of relays of mules all the way from the sea-coast to the capital. We had a good store of wine with us, and plenty of Havana cigars; and in the way of edibles the commissariat of Mexico is as abundant as that of Old Spain is meagre.* The route was singularly clear

* It is curious that in countries where wine is plentiful there should be nothing procurable to eat, and that in non-wine-growing, but beer or cider-producing, countries the traveller should always be sure of a good dinner. Out of the beaten track in Italy, a tourist runs the risk of being half starved. In Spain, he *is* starved habitually and altogether; but he

from highway robbers at that time; the French being in force at Cordova, Orizaba, and Puebla, and patrolling every league of the way, not only with their own dragoons, but with local levies known as contra-guerrilleros. Finally, we had taken the precaution of leaving behind us in safe care at Vera Cruz, our watches, gold 'onzas,' and other valuables, keeping only a few loose dollars for the expenses of the journey. I even left my clothes and servant on the coast, and during the six weeks I remained in Mexico city was not only boarded and lodged, but washed and clothed by my generous host: even to the articles of purple and fine linen, lapis-lazuli wrist-buttons, a Mexican hat as broad as a brougham wheel, and a pair of spurs with rowels as big as cheese-plates. So, if we had been robbed on the way, the guerillas would have found very little of which to plunder us. The pain, the misery, the wretchedness I endured, almost without intermission for six days —at night you generally dreamed of your bumps, and suffered all your distresses over again—were entirely due to the abominable road upon which we entered, for our sins, at La Soledad, and which we did not leave until we came to the very custom-house

is sure of victuals in England, in America, and in Russia. Even in the East, fowls, eggs, kids, and rice are generally obtainable in the most out-of-the-way places; but many a time have I been dismissed hungry from a village hostelry in France with the cutting remark: 'Monsieur, nous n'avons plus rien.' There is an exception to the rule in Germany —I except Prussia—which bounteous land runs over with wine, beer, beef, veal, black and white bread, potatoes, salad, and sauerkraut.

arrier of Mexico. Sixteen years have passed since I travelled on the Czar's Highway and found it bad. I have waded through the Virginian mud since then; have made acquaintance with muleback on the banks of the Guadalquivir; have tried a camel (for a very short time) at Oran. But I can conscientiously declare that I never found so hard a road to travel as that road between Vera Cruz and Mexico, and I am confident that, were I to live to sixty years of age (the Mexican railway by that time being completed and paying fifteen per cent on its stock, and a beautifully Macadamised carriage road running beside it for three hundred miles) and I were questioned as to what the Mexican highway was like in 1864, I should, on the 'beating the bounds' principle, preserve as lively a remembrance of its horrors as I preserve of it now, a peaceable and contented daily traveller on the Queen's Highway and the Metropolitan Railway.

Had I not been somewhat obtuse, I might have noticed on board the steamer which brought us from Havana, that my friend was nervous, even to uneasiness, as to the form my earliest impressions of Mexican travelling might assume. I must expect to 'rough it' a little, he remarked. I answered that I had tried an American ambulance wagon, and a M'Clellan saddle, and that I could not imagine anything rougher than those aids to locomotion. 'Our roads are not quite up to the mark of Piccadilly,' he would hint sometimes. 'You see, since the French

came to attack Juarez, everything has been knocked into a cocked hat.' However, he always wound up his warnings by declaring that we shouldn't find a single robber on the road, and that we should go up to Mexico, 'like a fiddle.' If the state in which I eventually reached Mexico bore any resemblance to the musical instrument in question, it must have been akin to that of the fiddle of the proprietor of the bear in *Hudibras*, warped and untuned, with my bow broken, a fracture in my stomach, another in my back, and my strings flying all abroad.

I sincerely hope that I shall never see Vera Cruz again: — the ill-omened, sweltering, sandy, black, turkey-buzzard-haunted home of yellow fever! I shall not forget, however, that I was hospitably entertained there, and especially I shall never lose consciousness of a long telescope in the saloon overlooking the roadstead, to which I am indebted for one of the drollest scenes I ever saw in my life. There were three or four French men-of-war stationed at Vera Cruz at the time, but they could not lie in the harbour, which is not by any means landlocked, and has but an insufficient breakwater in the castle of San Juan de Ulloa. The Spithead of Vera Cruz is off Sacrificios, a place which owes its name to the horrible human sacrifices perpetrated there up to the time of Cortes' invasion. Sunday being the Frenchman's day of joyous recreation all over the world, leave had been granted, with some liberality, to the crews of the war-ships in port; and from our window

we had seen, during the morning and afternoon, numerous parties of gallant French Jack-tars—they are so picturesquely dandified in appearance, that they more closely resemble patent blacking than common tar—swaggering along the strand, peeping under the mantillas of the women, kissing their hands to tawny old Indian dames smoking their papelitos in shadowy doorways, and occasionally singing and skipping, through mere joyousness of heart and exuberance of spirits. Many of the men-o'-war's men were negroes from the Mauritius, and it was very pleasant to remark that their colour did not in the least interfere with their being hail-fellow-well-met with the white seamen. But you would very rarely see an American and a black foremast-man arm-in-arm. These fine fellows of the Imperial French navy had, I hope, attended service at the cathedral in the morning; but, as day wore on, they had certainly patronised the aguardiente shops with great assiduity; and spirituous intoxication, following, perhaps, on a surfeit of melons, shaddocks, and pineapples, in a tropical climate, is not very good for the health. Touching at St. Thomas's once, I said inquiringly to the captain of the mail steamer, 'And this is the white man's grave, is it?' 'No,' he answered, '*that* is;' and he pointed to a brandy-bottle on the cabin-table.

I don't think I ever saw so many tipsy tars as I did that Sunday at Vera Cruz. Portsmouth, with a squadron just in from a long cruise, was a temperance

hotel compared with this tropical town. It is difficult to repress a smile when one is told that Frenchmen never get tipsy. All that I have seen of French soldiers and sailors on active service, leads me to the persuasion that they will drink as much as they can get; and in their cups they are inexpressibly mischievous, and not unfrequently very savage. Yet, although rowdy, insolent, and quarrelsome, they rarely fall to fisticuffs, as our men do.* On this particular Sunday they so frightened Vera Cruz from its propriety—the inhabitants being mainly an abstemious race, suffering from chronic lowness of spirits, in consequence of civil war and the yellow fever—that pickets of infantry were sent out from the main guard to pick up inebriated mariners and pack them off on board ship again. The French are very quick at adapting themselves to the usages of the country they visit, and, short as was the time they had been in Mexico, they had learnt the use of that wonderfully serviceable instrument, the lasso. The pickets, wearing only their side-arms, went

* You will find, in Algeria, at the military penitentiaries, 'disciplinary battalions,' formed almost entirely of incorrigible drunkards. The excesses committed by the French in Mexico, and which were generally induced by libations of aguardiente or commissariat brandy, were atrocious; in fact, they bore out the reputation given them by the Duke of Wellington in his evidence before the Royal Commission on Military Punishments. See LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY, AND MUSKETRY, in *Household Words*, 1851. Five out of ten soldiers who massacred the citizens of Paris on the boulevards in the December of that year were drunk.—(P.S.) I wrote these remarks in 1866. Since then we have seen the war of 1870 and the insurrection of 1871, and a great deal more of what the 'temperate' French can do in the way of tippling.

about lassoing tipsy sailors right and left, most scientifically; and after they had caught their men in running nooses, they 'coralled them'—that is to say, they would encircle a whole group of nautical bacchanalians with a thin cord, which, being tightened, the whole body of revellers would be drawn close together. Then, the pickets would, with mild applications of their sheathed bayonets, astern, run the captives down to the waterside, and tumble them into the boats which were to convey them on board their respective ships.

This afternoon's entertainment had continued for some time; and the last boat-load of topers having been dispatched, Vera Cruz was once more left to the blazing sunshine, and to the black scavenger buzzards. My hosts were all in their hammocks (slung in the corridor), enjoying their siesta. I could not sleep, and bethought me of the long brass telescope on a tripod in the balcony. I got the lens adjusted to my sight at last, and made out the castle of San Juan; the tricoloured flag idly drooping from the staff on the tower; the shining black muzzles of the cannon, looking out of the embrasures of the bastions, like savage yet sleepy mastiffs blinking from their kennels; the sentinel, with a white turban round his shako, pacing up and down; the bright bayonet on his rifle throwing off sparkling rays. But beyond the castle, some two miles distant, there was nothing to see. Sacrificios and the squadron were 'round the corner,' so to

speak, and out of my field of view. The native craft were all moored in-shore; and Vera Cruz is not a place where you go out pleasure-boating. There was nothing visible beyond the arid, dusty foreshore, but the excruciatingly bright blue sky and the intolerably bright blue sea: Jove raining down one canopy of molten gold over the whole, as though he thought that Danaë was bathing somewhere in those waters. I fell a musing over poor Alexander Smith's

'All dark and barren as a rainy sea.'

The barrenness here was as intense; but it was from brightness. You looked upon a liquid desert of Sahara. Ah! what is that? A dark speck midway between the shore and the horizon. The tiniest imaginable speck. I shift the telescope, try again, and again focus my speck. It grows, it intensifies, it *is*, with figures large as life, so it seems, finished with Dutch minuteness, full of colour, light, and shade, colour animation, a picture that gross Jan Steen, that Hogarth, that Callot, might have painted. A boat crammed full of tipsy sailors. There is one man who feels very unwell, and who, grasping his ribs with either hand, grimaces over the 'gunwale in a most pitiable manner. Another is argumentatively drunk, and is holding forth to a staid quartermaster, who is steering. Another is harmoniously intoxicated. Then there is a man who is in a lachrymose state of liquor, and is probably bewailing La Belle France and his Mother. Suddenly a negro, who is

Mad Drunk, tries to jump overboard. Such a bustle, such a commotion! They get the obstreperous black man down and lay him in the sheets, and he too begins to sing. It is as though you were a deaf man *looking* at the 'propos des buveurs,' in Rabelais. And in the midst of all this the boat with its stolid sober rowers goes pitching and bounding about the field of the telescope, sometimes swerving quite out of it, and leaving but a blank brightness; then, coming into full focus again, in all its wondrous detail of Reality.

After a night not entirely unembittered by the society of mosquitoes, we rose; took the conventional cup of chocolate, crust of dry bread, and glass of cold water; and, bidding farewell to our entertainers, drove to the railway terminus. I didn't expect much from a railway point of view, and consequently was not disappointed. We have all heard of things being rough and ready. There was plenty of roughness here, without the readiness. It was nearly noon, and the industrial staff of the station, represented by two Indians in striped blankets (serving them for coat, vest, and pantaloons), and monstrous straw hats, were sleeping in two handbarrows. The station-master, a creole Spaniard, had slung his grass hammock in a shady nook behind the pay-place, and was sleeping the sleep of the just. There was a telegraph office, recently established by the French; and the operator, with his face resting on his arms, and those limbs resting on the bran-new mahogany

instrument from Paris, snored peacefully. It was the most primitive station imaginable. There was one passenger waiting for the train, a half-caste Mexican 'greaser,' fast asleep at full length on the floor, and with his face prone to it. He had a bag of Indian corn with him, on which, for safety, he lay; and he had brought a great demi-pique saddle too, which rested on his body, the stirrup leathers knotted together over the pummel, and which looked like a bridge over the river Lethe. Where was his horse? I wondered. Did he own one, or had his gallant steed been shot under him in battle, and was he on his way to steal another? Altogether, this rickety ruinous railway station, with the cacti growing close to the platform, and with creepers twining about every post and rafter, and bits of brick, and stray scaffold-poles, and fragments of matting, and useless potsherds, and coils of grass rope littered about in the noontide glare, reminded me with equal force of an Aztec building speculation overtaken by bankruptcy, and of a tropical farmyard in which all the live stock had died of yellow fever.

The time for the train to start had long expired; but there was no hurry; so my travelling companion lay down with his head on the half-caste's saddle and took a little nap. I wandered on to the platform, and there, to my pleasurable surprise, found one man who was awake. Who but a French gendarme? One of a picked detachment of that admirable force sent out to Mexico to keep both invaders and in-

vaded in order—combed, brushed, polished, waxed, pomatumed, booted, spurred, sabred, belted, cocked-hatted, gauntleted, medalled—a complete and perfect gendarme. He was affable, sententious, and dogmatic. 'Mexico,' he observed, 'was a country without hope.' I have since inclined to the belief that the gendarme did not dogmatise quite unreasonably on this particular head. He farther remarked that discipline must be maintained, and that in view of that necessity he had usually administered 'une fameuse volée,' in the shape of blows with the flat of his sword, to the station-master. He accepted a cigar, to be reserved for the time of his relief from duty; and not to be behindhand in politeness, he favoured me with a pinch of snuff from a box bearing on the lid the enamelled representation of a young lady, in her shirt-sleeves and a pair of black-velvet trousers, dancing a jig of a carnavalesque kind. 'I adore the theatre,' said the gendarme. 'Monsieur has no doubt seen *La Belle Hélène* in Paris?' I replied that I had witnessed the performance of that famous extravaganza. 'Ah!' continued the gendarme, with something like a sigh. 'They essayed it at Maùritius; but it obtained only a success of esteem. Monsieur may figure to himself the effect of a Belle Hélène who was a mulatto. As for "Agamemnon," he did not advance at all. J'aurais bien flanqué trois jours de salle de police à ce gredin là? I intend, Monsieur,' he concluded, 'to visit the Bouffes, and to assist at a representation of the

work of M. Jacques Offenbach, when I reimpatriate myself and enter the civil.' Honest gendarme! I hope the Vomito spared him, and that he has reimpatriated himself by this time, and seen not only *La Belle Hélène*, but *Orphée aux Enfers* and *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*.

The station-master woke up about one o'clock, and it appeared that he had sent a messenger down into the town to ask my friend at what time he would like to have the train ready. There was no other passenger save the half-caste, who would very cheerfully have waited until the day after next, or the week after next, or the Greek Kalends. My friend said he thought we might as well start at once; so half a dozen Indians were summoned from outhouses where they had been dozing, and we proceeded to a shed, and picked out the most comfortable carriage in the rolling stock, which was but limited. We found a 'car' at last, of the American pattern, open at either end, but with cane-bottomed instead of stuffed-seats, and Venetian blinds to the windows. The engine, also, presently came up puffing and sweating to remind us of a fact which had, at least, slipped my memory — that we were living in the nineteenth and not in the ninth century;—a locomotive of the approved American model; blunderbuss funnel; 'cow-catcher' in front; penthouse in rear for the driver; warning bell over the boiler, and 'Asa Hodge and Co., Pittsburg, Pa.' embossed on a plate on the 'bogey' frame. Everything in this

country which in mechanical appliances can remind you of civilisation, comes from the United States. New York is to Mexico as Paris is to Madrid.

The machine had an Indian stoker, and uncommonly like a gnome, or a kobold, or some other variety of the demon kind did that Indian look, with his coppery skin powdered black with charcoal dust, and his grimy blanket girt around him with a fragment of grass-rope. But the engine-driver was a genuine Yankee—in a striped jacket and a well-worn black-satin vest—a self-contained man, gaunt, spare, mahogany-visaged, calm, collected, and expectoratory, with that wonderful roving Down-East eye, which always seems to be looking out for something to patent, and make two hundred and fifty thousand dollars by. But for the Mexican sombrero which he had donned, and the revolver which he wore conspicuously in his belt, you might have taken him for a law-abiding manufacturer of patent clothes-wringers or mowing-machines, from Hartford or Salem. He 'passed the time of day' to us very civilly, and confirmed the good news that there were no guerrilleros on the road. 'The French have fixed up a whole crowd of 'em about Puebla,' he said, 'and they don't care about being hung up by the score, like hams round a stove pipe. I ain't been shot at for a month, and I've loaned my Sharp's rifle to a man that's gone gunning down to the Cameroons.'

The long car we had selected was attached to the locomotive, and a luggage van coupled to that, in

which a fatigue party of French soldiers who had just marched into the station placed a quantity of commissariat stores for the detachment on duty at La Soledad. We got under weigh, but, the line being single, were temporarily shunted on to a siding: the telegraph having announced the coming in of a train from the interior.

A few minutes afterwards there rumbled into the station a long string of cars, which disgorging their contents, the platform became thronged with, at least, five hundred men; stranger arrivals by an excursion train I never saw. The strangers were mostly tall athletic fellows, clean limbed, and with torsos like to that of the Farnese Hercules. Noble specimens of humanity: and every man of them as black as the Ace of Spades. They were in slave-dealers' parlance —now, happily a dead language—'full-grown buck-niggers.' They were uniformly clad, in loose jerkins, vests, and knickerbockers of spotless white linen; and their ebony heads — many of them very noble and commanding in expression, straight noses and well-chiselled lips being far from uncommon—were bound with snowy muslin turbans. These five hundred men, shod with sandals of untanned hide, armed with musket and bayonet, and the short heavy Roman 'tuck' or stabbing sword, and carrying their cartouch-boxes in front of them, formed a battalion of that noted Nubian contingent, of whom there were three regiments altogether, hired from the Viceroy of Egypt by the French government for service in Mexico.

They had come down from La Soledad to reinforce the wasting garrison of Vera Cruz, of which the European portion were dying of Vomito like sheep of the rot. The sergeants and corporals were black; but the commissioned officers were Egyptian Arabs, sallow, weazened, undersized creatures in braided surtouts of blue camlet, and red fez caps. They compared very disadvantageously with the athletic and symmetrically-built negroes.

These Nubians, my friend the gendarme told me, were good soldiers, so far as fighting went, but irreclaimable scoundrels. They were horribly savage, and jabbered some corrupted dialect with Arabic for its base, but Mumbo Jumbo for its branches, and which their own officers could scarcely understand. The system by which discipline was preserved among them had been beautifully simplified. If a Nubian soldier didn't do what he was told, his officer, for the first offence, fell to kicking him violently. If he persisted in his disobedience, the officer drew his sabre, and cut him down.

Think of a Mahometan Khedive letting out his two thousand Pagan negroes to a Roman Catholic emperor, in order that he might coerce the Spanish and Red Indian population of an American republic into recognising the supremacy of an Austrian archduke! As the Enemy of Mankind is said to have remarked on a memorable occasion, 'It's a queer lot, and the cards want sorting.'

THE DIVERSIONS OF LA SOLEDAD.

THE Imperial Mexican railway, in the year 1864, was in its infancy. The entire line of route had been carefully surveyed, and beautifully mapped out; all engineering difficulties had been disposed of, on paper, and vast numbers of labourers were employed on cuttings and embankments; but nine-tenths of the line yet remained to be made. A considerable impetus had been given to all kinds of industry in the normally distracted country just then. The unfortunate Maximilian had accepted the crown from the commission of Mexican 'notables' who waited on him at Miramar; and General Almonte had been appointed president of a Council of Regency until 'El Principe,' as the emperor elect was called, should arrive. As for Don Benito Juarez, he was nobody, and, in sporting parlance, might be said to be 'nowhere.' He was supposed to be hiding his diminished head in the neighbourhood of Brownsville, on the frontier of Texas, and I have heard him spoken of innumerable times by Mexican politicians (who are, I daresay, very ardent Juarists by this time), in the most contemptuous terms. The mildest epi-

thet with which he was qualified was 'El Indio,' the Indian: President Juarez having scarcely any European blood in his veins. More frequently he was called 'the bandit,' or the 'banished despot.'

So everything looked very bright and hopeful in Mexico; a strong French force occupying the country; and the railway (which was already open for traffic as far as La Soledad) was being pushed forward towards Paso del Macho. We jogged along pretty steadily in our omnibus car; but, until we reached a place called Manga de Clavo, I thought that Mexico must be the counterpart of the Egyptian desert. For miles the line was skirted by sandhills. There were more sandhills in the middle distance, and the extreme horizon was bounded by sandhills; the whole of which, illumined by a persistently ferocious sunshine, offered the reverse of an encouraging prospect. Luckily there was no sirocco, or the sand would have invaded the carriage and choked us.

But with magical rapidity the scene changed, and the desert bloomed into fruitfulness amazing. The train plunged into a densely wooded country. We saw thick clumps of trees spangled with blossoms or bending under the load of bright-hued tropical fruits; the foreground was literally one parterre of variegated flowers, and the 'cow-catcher' of the engine scattered roses as we marched. I began to warm into enthusiasm. We hurried by palm trees, cocoa-nut trees, lemon and orange groves, and forests of the banana. That tree with its broad blood-

stained leaves, and its body reft and bent by the last hurricane and the last rainstorm, swaying and bulging, but abating not one jot of its ruby ruddiness, should furnish a potent liquor; but the fruit of the banana is in reality very mild and suave; conveying to the mind, in its dulcet mawkishness, the idea of sweet shaving paste. It is most tolerable when fried, and served as a savoury dish. And here I may remark that the majority of tropical fruits are productive of most grievous disappointment when eaten. From the shaddock downward, I don't think I met any which caused me to think disparagingly of the central avenue at Covent Garden in London, or of the Marché St. Honoré in Paris. Abnormal size is the principal characteristic of tropical fruits. They are intensely sweet; but the saccharine matter has an ugly propensity to turn acid on the stomach and kill you. The flavour is generally flaccid and insipid. From this general censure must be always excepted the *sweet* lemon—not the lime—a most exquisitely toothsome fruit.

Ever and anon, in the density of this new and delicious landscape, there would occur an opening revealing a little valley vividly green, studded with flowers, and perchance with a few scattered wigwams built of palm branches and thatched with palm leaves. The Indian women in their simple costume —almost invariably consisting of two articles, a chemise of coarse white cotton cloth called 'manta' and a narrow petticoat-skirt of red and black, or black

and yellow striped stuff — looked, at a distance, picturesque enough. Round about all the palm-branch wigwams there were seen to be sprawling groups of Indian 'papooses' or babies of the precise hue of roast fowls well done. Their costume was even more simple than that of their mammas. Mexican scenery, save where the massive mountain passes intervene, is one continuous alternation. Now comes a belt so many miles broad of wonderful fertility. Indian corn—the stalks as tall as beadles' staves, the cobs as large as cricket bats — oranges, lemons, bananas, sugar, coffee, cotton, rice, cinnamon, nutmegs, and all manner of spices. Then, for many more miles, you have a belt of absolute barrenness, a mere sandy desert. What I saw of Mexico reminded me of a tiger's skin —dull yellow desert barred with rich dark brown stripes of fertility. The land is like a Sahara diversified by slices from the valley of Kashmir.

The sun was throwing very long blue shadows indeed from the objects which skirted our track, when we brought up at the straggling structure of deal boards, palm branches, and galvanised tinned iron, or zinc sheds, which did duty as the railway terminus of La Soledad. We found a number of very hospitable gentlemen waiting to receive us; the sleepy telegraphic operator at Vera Cruz having apparently made himself sufficiently wide awake to notify our coming. He had done us good service. A cordial welcome and a good dinner awaited us. Our hosts were the engineers and surveyors engaged

on the works of the railway; and the Engineer is always well off for commissariat supplies. He is the only foreigner, the only invader, on whom the rudest and most superstitious races look without disfavour; for, from the lord of the neighbouring manor, to the parish priest—nay, to the meanest day labourer—everybody has a dim impression that the bridge, or the aqueduct, or the railway, will do the country good, and that every inhabitant of the district will, sooner or later, 'get something out of it.'

Our friends of La Soledad were accomplished gentlemen, full of the traditions of Great George-street, Westminster; pioneers from the Far West; rough Lancashire gangers and hard-handed Cornishmen. They were banded together, by the responsibilities of a common undertaking, and by the consciousness of a common danger; for, until within the last few weeks, every man had worked with his life in his hand. The station of La Soledad had been attacked by banditti, over and over again; and it had been a common practice with the guerrilleros to lie in wait in the jungle, and 'pot' the passengers in passing trains. Even now, the little group were lamenting the loss of their managing engineer, who had been shot while riding along an unfinished portion of the line. 'The colonel lasted six days after they'd hit him,' an American overseer of workmen told me; 'and it was a desperate cruel thing, seeing that he left a wife and three small children; but he'd had a good time, I guess, the colonel had. "Brown,"

he ses, turning to me, and clasping my hand as he lay on the mattress in that hut over yonder, "they've done for me at last; but I reckon I've shot eight of 'em since last fall." And so he had.'

There were two other points in which our railway friends were cheerfully unanimous. They all concurred in despising the Mexicans, and disliking the French. 'As for the half-castes and Spaniards,' the American overseer remarked, 'they're right down scallywaggs. Hanging's too good for 'em; and the only thing that makes me bear the French is, that when they catch a Mexican guerrillero, they cowhide him first, and shoot him afterwards, and hang him up as a climax. As for the Injuns, they're poor weak-kneed creatures; but there's no harm in 'em. About a hundred will do the work of ten stout Irishmen. I used to try licking of 'em at first, to make 'em spry; but, bless you! they don't mind licking. They just lie down on the turf like mules. Well I recollected how the mayoral of a diligencia makes his team to go when they're stubborn; he just gets down and walks behind, and he fills his pocket with sharp little stones, and every now and then he shies a stone which hits a mule behind the ear, and he cries 'Ha-i-a-youp!' and the mule he shakes his head, and gallops along full split. When I see my Indian peons shirking their work, I just sit on a stone about fifty yards off, and every minute or so I let one of 'em have a pebble underneath the left ear. The crittur wriggles like an eel in a pump-log,

and falls a working as though he was going to build Babel before sundown.'

Why the French should have been so intensely disliked I could not rightly determine. That the Mexicans should have hated them was feasible enough; but I rarely found an Englishman or a German in Mexico who would give the army of occupation a good word. I have frequently expressed my opinion that a Frenchman in a black coat, in light pantaloons, in straw-coloured kid gloves, in a blouse and sabots, even, is a most agreeable, friendly, light-hearted creature; but make his acquaintance when he is on active service, in a képi and scarlet pantaloons, and I fear you will find that a more arrogant and a more rapacious swashbuckler does not exist. That is the character, at least, which the French warrior has gotten in Mexico, in Algeria, in Germany, in Italy — his transient spell of popularity in '59 excepted—and in Spain.

I remember that the ragged assemblage of maize, and palm-straw, and mud, and wattle huts, which forms the town of La Soledad, lay in the midst of a broad valley, the sides shelving to a rocky base, through which ran a shallow river. I came to this place on the last day of February. There had been heavy rains a few days previously, and there was some water, but not much, in the bed of the river. In the summer the rivers of Mexico are as dry as the Paglione at Nice; and the bridges seems as useless as spurs to the military gentlemen in garrison at

Venice. There was a detachment of French infantry at La Soledad, whose cheerful bugles were summoning the wearers of about two hundred pairs of red trousers to the evening repast, of which 'ratatouille,' a kind of gipsy stew, forms the staple ingredient. This evening meal is called the 'ordinaire,' and is made up of the leavings of the day's rations, and of such odds and ends of victual as the soldiers have managed to purchase or forage. There is no such evening entertainment in the British army. Our men eat their clumsily cooked rations in a hurry, and often pass long hours of hunger between their ill-arranged meals. The bugle-calls of the French brought from the shingly shores of the river numbers of moustached warriors who had been washing their shirts and gaiters—socks were not worn by the army of occupation—in the stream. It was very pretty to watch the red-legged figures winding along the paths running upward through the valley, with boards laden with white linen on their heads. There was a grand background to the picture in a mountain range, rising tier above tier: not in blue delicate peaks and crags, as in the Alps, but in solid, sullen, dun-coloured masses. I can recall one now, with ribbed flanks, and a great shelving head, that looked like an old brown lion couchant.

The railway gentlemen resided at a little cantonment of timber and corrugated zinc huts, the last of which, although weather-tight, and agreeably repellent of various insects (which swarm in wooden structures),

were, when the sun shone, intolerably hot. As the sun so shone habitually, without mercy, from eight in the morning until six in the evening, the corrugated zinc huts became by sunset so many compact ovens, suited either to baking, broiling, or stewing the inmates. However, life in Mexico amounts, in the long run, only to a highly varied choice of evils; and devouring insects being somewhat more aggravating than a warm room, the engineers had chosen that evil which they deemed the lesser. I suffered so terribly, however, during my sojourn in this highly rarified country, from determination of blood to the head, hat I entreated my hosts to be allowed to sleep under a palm thatch in lieu of corrugated zinc. My wish was acceded to—to my partial destruction.

We dined sumptuously on hot stews, made much hotter with chiles and 'peperos,' the effect of which last condiment on the palate I can only compare to that of a small shrapnel shell going off in your mouth. We had plenty of sound claret, and, if I remember right, a flask or so of that white-seal champagne which at transatlantic tables is considered to be many degrees preferable to Veuve Clicquot. A bottle of 'Sunny-side' Madeira, warranted from a Charleston 'garret,' was also produced. We were too recently from Havana to be unprovided with Señor Anselmo del Valle's fragrant merchandise; and let me whisper to the wanderer, that he who spares no efforts to be provided with good cigars in his baggage, will be at least enabled to make some slight return for the hospitality

he will receive. For, in these far-distant cantonments, the stock of cigars is liable to run out, and can with difficulty be renewed.

After dinner we talked Mexican politics—a conversation which generally resolved itself into three conclusions. First, that when things come to the worst they may mend. Second, that things had come to the worst in Mexico. Third, that Maximilian and his empire might last as long as the French occupation continued, and as long as his own stock of gold ounces and hard dollars held out. I can aver that on this last head I never heard any more sanguine opinion expressed during the whole time I was in Mexico. Then we played a hand at poker, and tried a rubber at whist, then songs were sung, and then we went out for a walk. The French tattoo had sounded, and most of the moustached warriors had retired to their huts; but there were strong pickets patrolling the streets, and double guards posted at every gate. When I speak of the 'gates' of this place, I allude simply to certain booms or logs of timber placed athwart blocks of stone at intervals, and by the side of each of which was a French guard hut. When I allude to La Soledad's 'streets,' I mean simply that the palm-branch and mud-and-wattle huts of the Indian and half-caste population had been erected in two parallel lines, with a few alleys of smaller hovels, with succursals of dunghills branching from them. Once upon a time, I believe La Soledad had possessed a 'plaza,' several stone houses, and two churches; but all that

kind of thing had been, to use the invariable American locution when speaking of the ravages of civil war, 'knocked into a cocked hat' by contending partisans.

In La Soledad, we lived in an easy fashion. We dined without any table-cloth, and with a great many more knives than forks. We occasionally carved a fowl with a bowie-knife. Our claret had been drawn direct from the wood into calabashes of potters' ware, kneaded and fired on the spot, and the white-seal champagne had been opened by the simple process of knocking the neck off the bottles. It was very unconventional when we sallied forth on a stroll to see the mats which served as doors to the Indian huts all drawn on one side, and the inmates making their simple preparations for retiring for the night, such preparations consisting chiefly in everybody taking off what little he had on, and curling himself up in a ball on the straw-littered ground. The family mule was tethered to a post outside, and the background was filled up by the family pigs and poultry. It was the county of Tipperary with a dash of a Bedouin douar, and a poetic tinge of the days of the Shepherd Kings of Palestine. Everybody had, however, not gone to bed. There was life at La Soledad; life half of a devotional, half of a dissolute kind. The stone churches, as I have said, had been 'knocked into a cocked hat,' but Ave Maria was sounding on a little cracked bell suspended between three scaffold poles, and a dusky congregation—all Indians—were kneeling on the threshold of a wigwam somewhat larger, but fully as

rudely fashioned as its neighbours, where an Indian priest was singing Vespers. There could not have been a more unconventional church. The poor celebrant was desperately ragged and dirty, and his vestments were stuck over with little spangles and tarnished scraps of foil paper; but he had a full, sonorous voice, which seemed to thrill his hearers strangely. Two great twisted torches of yellow wax were placed on the altar, which looked like a huge sea-chest. Another torch, of some resinous wood, flamed at the entrance of the hut, and threw the kneeling worshippers into Rembrandt-like masses of light and shade. On the altar were the usual paltry little dolls—not much paltrier than you may see in the most superb fanes in Italy or Spain—but there was one singularly unconventional ornament. The poor *cura* of the church, I was told, had waited on the railway officials and begged for something to adorn his fabric withal: something 'European' the honest man wanted. They had given him a few dollars, and a couple of those enormous coloured lamps which at night are fixed in front of locomotives. One of these, a red one, another a green one, he had fixed on either side of his altar; and there they were, glaring out of the wigwam like two unearthly eyes.. Close to the church was a public gaming house, to justify Defoe's

> 'Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
> The Devil always builds a chapel there.'

It was contemptuously tolerated by the French, on condition that no soldier of their nation should be

suffered to play in it, and that if any knives were used on the disputed question of a turn-up card, the proprietor should be liable to be hanged. But the Mexicans are admirable gamesters, and very rarely stab over their play. They prefer lying in wait for you in the dark, and admonishing you, by a puncture under the fifth rib, or a ball in the occiput, that you had best not be so lucky at cards next time. The gambling-house had nothing of the conventional Frascati or German Kursaal aspect about it. It was just a long wigwam, open in front, and with some rough planks on tressels running along its whole length. It reminded me of a hastily improvised refreshment booth at a cricket match. There was no 'tapis vert,' unless the sward on which the tressels rested could pass muster as a 'green carpet.' There were no pure Indians present. Gambling, cheating, and robbing are the business of the Spanish half-castes. These exemplary gentry lined the long table, erect, statuesque in their striped blankets and great coach-wheel hats, motionless, save when they extended their long skinny hands to plant their stakes, or to grasp their winnings. With the exception of an occasional hoarse cry of 'Tecolóti'—referring to a chance in the game—'Gaño todo,' 'I win all,' or 'Pierde el Soto,' 'The knave loses,' there was silence. The game was Monté, of which it is sufficient to say that it bears a vague affinity to lansquenet and to blind hookey, and is about one hundred times more speculatively ruinous than vingt-un or un-

limited loo. At La Soledad the stakes were dollars, halves, and quarters, and even copper coins. I saw one man win about five pounds on a turn-up. He lost all and more within the next five minutes, and stalked away apparently unconcerned: whether to bed, or to hang himself, or to wait for a friend and murder him, I had no means of ascertaining. Not many days afterwards I had the honour of being present at several entertainments, of which Monté was the object, in the City of Mexico. There we were quite conventional. We gathered in full evening dress. We had wax lights, powdered footmen, and cool beverages handed round on silver salvers. In lieu of the poor little silver and copper stakes of La Soledad, the piles of gold ounces and half doubloons rose to a monumental height; but there was no difference in the good breeding of the players. The blanketed rapscallions of La Soledad were just as phlegmatic over their Monté as the wealthiest dons in Mexico.

We watched this small inferno for some time; and I was much amused to observe that one of the most sedulous of the punters was a gaunt half-caste boy who, in a ragged shirt and raggeder drawers, had waited on us at dinner. The young reprobate must have risked a year's wages on every turn-up; but his employers did not seem to think that there was anything objectionable in his having adjourned from the dining-room to the gambling-table.

About ten o'clock the establishment was closed in

a very summary manner by a French patrol, who marched along the length of the booth, sweeping out the noble sportsmen before them as though with a broom that had a bayonet in it. And life at La Soledad being terminated, we went to bed. For my part I sincerely wish I had walked about all night, or had laid down in front of the great fire by the French guard-house. I must needs sleep in a wooden hut with a palm thatch, and I was very nearly bitten to death. There were mosquitoes, there were fleas, there were cockroaches—unless they were scorpions —and, finally, O, unutterable horror! there were *black ants*. I sometimes fancy that a few of those abominable little insects are burrowing beneath my skin to this day.

THE CITY OF THE ANGELS.

'THEY call it,' quoth the Canonigo, 'Puebla de los Angelos; but, for my part,' he continued confidentially, 'I don't think it would do this City of the Angels much harm if the Verdugo were to come hither, and hang every man, woman, and child at Puebla to a gallows forty feet high. Hombre!' went on the Canonigo, 'I think Puebla would be all the better for it; for, look you,' and here he sank his voice to a whisper, 'everything that walks on two legs in this city, and who is not a guerrillero—a brigand—is either a gambler, or a receiver of stolen goods.'

These were hard words, indeed, to hear from a patriotic Mexican gentleman, and a dignified ecclesiastic to boot, concerning a city so ancient and illustrious as Puebla. But the Canonigo knew what he was about. It was at the little village of Amosoque, a few miles from our destination, that our clerical friend uttered the strictures, recorded above, on the character of the Pueblanas. Now I knew nothing as yet of Puebla; but I should have been quite prepared to agree with anybody who had told me

that a little hanging—with perhaps a trifle of drawing and quartering—would have done a world of good to the people who congregated round our carriage window at Amosoque.

'Mala gente! mala gente!' murmured the Canonigo, looking at the Amosoquians who trooped up to the coach window, and stared in at us with sad fierce eyes mutely eloquent with *this* kind of discourse: 'I should like a wheel; I a horse; I that stout man's coat; I his hat; I his dollars; and I his blood.' 'Mala gente!' cried the Canonigo, drawing his head in somewhat abruptly, as an Amosoquian of very hungry aspect uttered the word 'Caridad!' in a tone which far more resembled a curse than a request. 'Por Dios, amigo,' quoth the Canonigo, 'I have nothing for you. Mala gente!' he concluded, sinking back on the cushions and taking a very vigorous puff at his cigar, 'Mala gente'—which, being translated, may be accepted as signifying 'blackguards all: a bad lot.'

Whenever you halt in a town or village of Old Spain your equipage will be surely surrounded by silent, moody men, wrapped in striped blankets or tattered cloaks, and with shabby hats slouched over their brows, who will regard you with glances that are sad, but not fierce. But faded as is their aspect, they have a quiet, resigned mien, not wholly destitute of dignity. Yonder tatterdemalion of the Castiles seems to say: 'I am destitute; but still I am a Don. Poverty is not a crime. I involve myself in my virtue, and have puffed prosperity away. I am bankrupt,

but it was through being security for a friend. I am Don Dogberry, and have had losses. I held shares in the Filibusters' Company (limited). The company is being wound up, and another call on the contributories will be made the day after to-morrow. If you like to give me half a peseta, you can.'

But New Spain! But Amosoque! That small, wiry, leathery, sooty-looking fellow is a half caste. Watch him scowling at you in his striped serape—farther south called a poncho—his huge coach-wheel hat like a cardinal's whitewashed, and minus the tassels; his loose linen drawers bulging through the slashes in his leathern overalls. Salvator might have painted him, but Salvator should have made some preliminary sketches in a Seven Dials slum and a Bowery whisky cellar, to get his hand in. The man of Amosoque utters nothing articulate save an occasional grunt of 'Caridad!' but his eyes are full of speech. They say, 'Your throat is precisely the kind of throat I should like to cut. I have cut many throats in my time. I am a bankrupt, but a fraudulent one. My father suffered the punishment of the "garrote vil;" and my brother-in-law is a garrotter in Orizaba. Give me a dollar, or by all the saints in Puebla, I, and Juan, and Pepe, and Fernan here will follow the coach and rob it.'

Amosoque is a great mart for spurs. The 'Espuelas de Amosoque' are renowned throughout Mexico, and the spur makers, I conjecture, allow the beggars to take the goods 'on sale or return.' They thrust

them in, four or five pairs in each hand, arranged starwise, at the windows, reminding you, in their startling spikiness, of the hundred-bladed penknives with which the Jew boys used to make such terrific lunges at the omnibus passengers in the old days, at the White Horse Cellar. These spurs of Amosoque are remarkable for nothing but their length and breadth—the rowels are not much smaller than cheese plates; but you can no more get clear of the place without purchasing a pair of 'espuelas,' than you can leave Montélimar in Provence without buying a packet of 'nougat.' I have forgotten the name of that village in Old Spain where fifty women always fly at you and force you to buy embroidered garters. A similar assault, though a silent one, is made on you at Amosoque.

But our mules are hackled to, again, and the mayoral has filled his jacket pocket with a fresh supply of pebbles to fling at their ears if they are lazy. Bump, bump, thud, thud, up the middle and down again. We are again travelling on the hard road. This kind of thing has been going on for many days; and this kind of village we have halted at over and over again. Ojo de Agua was very like Nopaluca; Nopaluca was very like Acagete; and all these were very like Amosoque. We are out of the dark defiles of the Cumbres—horrifying mountain passes, gray, jagged, arid, cataractless; no sierra caliente has greeted our eyesight since we left Orizaba. The open has been mainly desert, intolerable dust and caked baked

clod producing nothing but the nopal and the maguey, the prickly pear and the cactus. The former is picturesque enough, and besides, it yields the juice, which, fermented, the Indians and half castes call pulque, and on which they get swinishly intoxicated. An adult maguey is very stately to look upon; but goodness keep all nervous ladies, and people given to dreaming dreams, and young children, from the sight of the Mexican prickly pear. The plant assumes the most hideously grotesque forms. It is twisted, and bent, and gnarled like metal scroll work which some mad giant has crumpled up in his fingers, in a rage. It is a tangle of knotty zigzags interspersed with the prickly fruit, which can be compared to nothing but the flattened faces of so many demon dwarfs, green with bile and thickly sown with bristles. The prickly pear, to me, is Bogey.*

Let me see, where was it, between Orizaba and this evil place of Amosoque, bristling with spurs and scoundrels, that we picked up the Canonigo? Ah! I remember, it was at Sant' Augustin del Palmar. We reached Sant' Augustin at about two o'clock in the afternoon, just as the diligencia from Mexico had drawn up at the door of the principal fonda, and precisely in time for the diligence dinner. Now I would

* It may be mentioned that the heraldic cognisance of the Mexican nation bears intimate reference to the prickly pear. The legend runs that Cortes the Conquistador, during his march to Mexico, descried an eagle perched upon a nopal; and when the country achieved her independence four centuries afterwards 'the bird and bush' became the 'Mexican arms.'

have you to understand that the chief dish at the coach dinner in all regions Iberian, both on the hither and thither side of the Atlantic, and even beyond the Isthmus and under the southern cross, is the PUCHERO:* print it in capitals, for it is a grand dish; and that the puchero is the only thing in Old or New Spain concerning which tolerable punctuality is observed. You have heard, no doubt, of the olla-podrida as the 'national' dish of Spain; but, so far as my experience goes, it is a culinary preparation which, like the rich uncle in a comedy, is more talked about than seen. While I was in Mexico city my eye lighted one day on a placard in the window of a 'bodegon' or eating-house, in the Calle del Espiritu Santo, setting forth that on the ensuing Thursday at noon 'una arrogante olla' would be ready for the consumption of cavaliers. I saw this announcement on Monday morning, and for three days I remained on tenter hooks expecting to partake of this arrogant olla-podrida. I concealed my intention from my hospitable host. I was determined to do something independent. I had travelled long in search of beef; there might be, in the arrogant olla, a bovine element; and the efforts of long years might be crowned at last with success. I went on Thursday; but the vinegar of disappointment came to dash my oil. 'Hoy,

* The names of both the national dishes of Spain are derived from the utensils in which they are served. A puchero is a pipkin, and an olla an earthenware pot. Podrida means simply 'rotten'—observe the singular corruption of sense in the French 'pot pourri,' a vase full of dried roses and fragrant spices.

no,' said the keeper of the bodegon, 'mañana se abra.' There was to be no arrogant olla that day, there would be the next. Mañana means to-morrow; and to-morrow to a Spaniard means the Millennium. I have never tasted an olla, arrogant or submissive.

But of the puchero I preserve the pleasantest remembrances. There is beef in it: boiled beef: the French bouilli, in fact. There is bacon. There are garbanzos (broad beans), and charming little black-puddings, and cabbage, and delicate morsels of fried banana. It is very wholesome and very filling; and there is no use in your complaining that an odour of garlic pervades it; because the room and the table-cloth and your next neighbour are all equally redolent of the omnipresent 'ajo.' The puchero (poured from its pipkin) is in a very big platter; and what you have to do is to watch carefully for the dish as it is passed from hand to hand; to take care that it is not diverted from you by a dexterous flank movement of a cunning caballero manœuvring behind your back, or by the savage cavalry charge of the German bagman opposite. Seize the dish when you can, and hold on to it like grim Death with one hand, till you have filled your plate. Never mind if the lady next you looks pleadingly, piteously, upon you. She is the weaker vessel. Let her wait. Fill yourself with puchero; for you will get nothing else in the way of refreshment, save chocolate and cigars, for the next twelve hours. There is a proverb which justifies the

most brutal selfishness in this regard, and which I may translate thus :

'He who lets puchero pass
Is either in love, or asleep, or an Ass.'

Clutch it, then, for when it has once glided away you will never see it again.

For a wonder the puchero at the diligence dinner at Sant' Augustin del Palmar was not punctual. We had had soup; we had had frijoles (black beans fried in oil), we had had a seethed kid; but no puchero made its appearance. The traveller next to me, a stout black-whiskered man, in a full suit of black velveteen, enormous gold rings in his ears, and with a particoloured silk sash round his waist, grew impatient.

'Caballeros,' he cried, after another five minutes' delay, 'I am a plain man. I am a Catalan. Juan Estrellada is well known in Barcelona. But human patience has its limits. I propose that if the puchero is not at once brought in, that we rob this house and throw the landlord out of window.' The proposal was a startling one; but the Catalan looked as if he meant it; and I was much moved to remark that a murmur, seemingly not of disapprobation, ran round the table. A gentleman in a cloak, two guests off, remarked gutturally, 'Es preciso:' which may be taken as equivalent to 'Ditto to Mr. Burke,' and to an opinion that robbing the establishment was the right kind of thing to do. You are so continually falling among thieves in Mexico that your moral sense of honesty grows blunted; and you feel inclined,

when people come to you for wool, to send them away shorn. Fortunately for the landlord, the majority of the guests were philosophers, and had betaken themselves to smoking; and, fortunately for ourselves, just as the Catalan seemed to be preparing to put his resolution to the vote two gingerbread-skinned Indian boys came staggering in with the charger of puchero between them, and we fought for the meal like so many wolves, and I didn't come off the worst, I can assure you.

It was when I had secured, with great internal joy and contentment, the last remaining black-pudding in the dish, that I noticed that my right-hand neighbour—the Catalan was on the left—had suffered the puchero to pass. He told me that he ate but once a day; that he preferred to dine at six or seven; and that this was a fast day, too, and that he must keep his 'ayuno.' I had noticed him, when we alighted, clad in a black cassock and a tremendous 'shovel'—which brought the Barber of Seville and Basilio to my mind at once, trotting up and down, saying his breviary, and puffing at a very big cigar. This was our Canonigo. The good old man! I can see his happy, beaming face now, his smile calm as a mountain pool environed by tall cliffs, his clear, bright, trusting eyes. I can hear his frank, simple discourse: not very erudite, certainly, often revealing a curious inexperience of the world and its ways, but infinitely full of candour, and modesty, and charity. He held a prebendal stall in the cathedral of San Luis Potosi,

to which he was now returning, viâ Puebla and Mexico city, having journeyed down to Jalapa to see a brother in high military command, who lay sick in that unwholesome city. I call him 'our' Canonigo; for my friend and travelling companion, who had been separated from me by stress of company at the inn dinner-table, rejoining me, when we went into the colonnade to smoke, recognised the prebendary of San Luis Potosi as an old friend, and embraced him affectionately. The old gentleman was travelling in a rusty old berline of his own, but gave heartrending accounts of the hardships of the road he had endured since he left Jalapa. The post-houses were, indeed, very short of mules, to begin with: some thousands of those useful animals having been impressed by the French commissariat and transport corps. We had been tolerably successful in the way of mules, simply because my friend, among his other attributes, was an army contractor, and had most of the post-masters under his thumb; but the poor Canonigo had been frequently left for hours, destitute of cattle, at some wayside venta. It is not at all pleasant, I assure you, so to cool your heels and your coach wheels, while the Indian hostess sits on the ground, tearing her long black hair, and wringing her sinewy brown hands, and crying out that the Mala gente—the brigands—are in the neighbourhood, and will be down in half an hour, to smite everybody, hip and thigh.

Nothing would suit my host but that the Canonigo should take a seat in our carriage, and be of our party

up to Mexico. The good priest was nothing loth, for he owned that he was dreadfully frightened of the brigands, who had been committing frightful atrocities lately on the Jalapa road. I might have mentioned to you, ere this, that we had brought with us from La Soledad a sufficiently imposing escort, in the shape of an entire company of French infantry, who journeyed with us on the 'ride and tie' principle: half of them crowded inside and outside a kind of omnibus we had picked up in the post office at Orizaba, and half of them hanging on to the wheels—the omnibus often required pushing up hill or dragging out of a rut—or riding on the mules, or trudging through the sand or over the pebbles with their shakoes on the points of their bayonets, and their blue cotton handkerchiefs tied under their chins, with, perhaps, a damp plantain leaf superadded. These were the merriest set of fellows I ever met with; and they laughed and smoked and sang songs and capered all the way up to Mexico. They never asked us for drink-money, and were uniformly respectful, polite, and cheerful. They had a little boy-soldier with them—an 'enfant de troupe' in training to be a drummer—who was their pet and plaything and darling; and for whom, when he was tired of riding in or outside the omnibus, they would rig a kind of litter, made of knapsacks and ammunition blankets laid on crossed muskets, and with a canopy above of pocket-handkerchiefs tied together and held up by twigs. And they would carry the little man along, the sol-

diers singing and he joining in, with a 'Tra la, la! Tra la, la!' and the rest of the company beating their hands in applause from the top of the 'bus. There were but two officers with the company—the captain, who rode with us, and a sub-lieutenant, who preferred occupying the box seat of the longer vehicle. The captain was a pudgy little man, who, his stoutness notwithstanding, wore stays. He had been in Algeria, and, according to his showing, whenever he and Abd-el-Kader met, there had been weeping in the Smala and wailing in the Douar. He had been through the Crimean campaign, and, not very obscurely, insinuated that he, and not Marshal Pellisier, should, if the right man had got his deserts, have been made Duke of Malakoff. In fact, the fat little captain would have bragged Major Longbow's head off. He overflowed with good humour, however, and had a capital baritone voice. The sub, on the other hand, was a moody gaunt man, whose solitary epaulette seemed to have made him at once low-spirited and lopsided. It was as well, perhaps, that he did not form one of our party; for he evidently hated his captain with great fervour, and when they met, off duty, there was generally a squabble. 'I know my Duty, but I also know my Rights,' the sub used to mutter, looking fixed bayonets at his superior officer. He was scrupulously attentive to his duties, however, and never missed saluting his pudgy chief. I think the captain would have been infinitely rejoiced had the omnibus toppled over one of the yawning precipices in the Cumbrera,

and had the dismal chasm comfortably engulfed that cantankerous sub-lieutenant.

But the Canonigo had a berline. Well; that was very soon got rid of. The post-master, who was also landlord of the fonda where we dined—I remember that he expressed a hyperbolical wish to kiss my hands and feet at departing, and that he obliged us with two bad five-franc pieces in change for the napoleon we tendered him—would have none of the canonical equipage. 'Vale nada,' it is worth nothing, he said contemptuously. He hoped that the Canonigo would leave it 'until called for,' and that he would never call for it. But he was not destined to profit by the relinquishment of the vehicle. At first I suggested that it should be devoted to the use of the cantankerous sub-lieutenant, and that fatigue parties of light infantry should be harnessed to the pole, and drag it; but this proposal did not meet with much favour—especially among the light infantry—and the sub himself vehemently protested against making his entrance into Mexico, 'before his chiefs,' in a carriage, which he declared to be fit only for a quack doctor. 'There may be some,' he remarked, with a sardonic glance at the baritone captain, 'who would like to play Dulcamara, or imitate Mengin in a Roman helmet, selling pencils in the Place de la Concorde; for my part, I know my Duties, and I know my Rights.' In this dilemma Pedro Hilo was sent for. Pedro, a rather handsome half-caste, was the administrador or steward to the lordly proprietor of a hacienda—a

maguey plantation in the neighbourhood. He was accustomed to buy everything, even, as my friend hinted, to the portmanteaus, wearing apparel, and other spoils of travellers who had been waited upon in the stage coach by a select body of the Mala gente. Pedro came, saw, and purchased. He was a man of few words. 'Twenty dollars'—*pesos fuertes*—he said, and he drew a gold ounce from his sash and spun it into the air. 'Arriba!' cried Pedro Hilo, 'Heads.' Heads it was, and the administrador stuck to his text of twenty dollars. A doubloon—scarcely four pounds—is not much for a berline, albeit the thing was woefully the worse for wear; but what was to be done with it? The bargain was concluded, and the Canonigo pocketed the gold ounce.

As we were leaving Sant' Augustin del Palmar, our omnibus escort making a brilliant show with their scarlet pantaloons and bright guns and bayonets, we passed the determined Catalan, who was girding himself up to ascend the roof of the downward-bound diligence. 'I wish we had a few soldiers with us,' he remarked, as he took in another reef of his particoloured sash. 'A prod from a bayonet now and then might remind the postillion that it is his duty to drive his mules, and not to go to sleep under his monstrous millstone of a hat. Who ever saw such a sombrero save on a picador in the bull-ring? In Barcelona such hats would be put down by the police. I have paid for my place in the interior,' he continued, 'but the malpractices of the postillion and

the mayoral—who, I am assured, is in league with all the gangs of brigands between here and Cordova—can no longer be tolerated. I intend to mount the roof; and the first time that pig-headed driver goes to sleep again, I propose to myself to blow out his brains.' So he went away, significantly slapping a pouch of untanned leather at his hip, and which I surmised contained his Colt's revolver. A determined fellow, this Juan Estrellada from Catalonia, and the very man to be useful in a street pronunciamiento. I fancy that he was somewhat nettled that no practical upshot should have followed his proposal to rob the fonda and throw the landlord out of window, and that he was anxious, before he reached Vera Cruz, to do something, the memory of which posterity would not willingly let die.

The Canonigo was excellent company, but his excessive temperance somewhat alarmed me. His 'desayuno'—literally breakfast—would be taken at about four o'clock in the morning; for we always recommenced our journey at daybreak. Then he would take a cup of chocolate—a brown aromatic gruel mixed thick and slab—with one tiny loaf of Indian corn bread. And nor bite nor sup would he take again till sunset. The worst of it was that we were not always sure of finding supper when we reached the town or village where we had elected to stay the night. The Canonigo, however, seemed totally indifferent to our lighting upon an Egypt without any corn in it. His supper was always ready, and it

seemed to serve him in lieu of dinner, and lunch, and all besides. He produced his grass-woven cigar-case and begun to smoke. Not papelitos, mind. Everybody in Mexico—man, woman, or child, Spaniard, half-caste, or Indian—inhales the fumes of tobacco wrapped in paper, all day long. But the Canonigo was a smoker of puros, the biggest of Cabañas. They didn't make him sallow, they didn't make him nervous; and he never complained of headache—at least through smoking. On one occasion the worthy gentleman made the confession, 'Tengo mala cabeza'—'My head is bad.' It was on the night before we arrived at Amosoque. We chanced to put up at a venta kept by a Frenchman, whose wife was a capital cook, and whose cellar was, moreover, stocked with capital wine. He gave us an excellent supper, and we subsequently 'cracked'—I believe that is the correctly convivial expression—sundry bottles of that very sound Burgundy wine called Moulin-à-vent. Well, we were four to drink it, and the temperate Canon could scarcely count as one. He had a thimbleful, however—two thimblefuls, perhaps—nay, a bumper and a half—and the cockles of his good old heart were warmed. In his merriment he sang a wonderful song, setting forth how a donkey, wandering in a field, once fell upon a flute in which a shepherd had 'left' a tune. The donkey tootled, and the tune 'came out;' whereupon—'Aha!' brays the conceited animal, 'who shall say that donkeys cannot play the flute?'

Then the Canonigo, merging into another mood,

like Alexander at his feast, began to tell us about the saints—of the wonders worked by St. Lampsacus and St. Hyacinth, St. Petronilla and St. Jago of Compostella. And then he fell asleep, and I can't help thinking that he woke up the next morning slightly flustered about the 'cabeza,' and that the Moulin-à-vent might have had something to do with the severity with which he spoke about the inhabitants of the City of the Angels. 'However,' I said, as we drove into Puebla, 'we shall see—we shall see.'

We duly entered La Ciudad de los Angelos; but the Teetotum Laws forbid that I should proceed at once to tell you what we saw there. The fingers of Fate gave another twist to the Roulette-wheel of life. Round whirled the ball; round spun the teetotum, and down it came at last, with AFRICA uppermost.

COCKPIT ROYAL.

'Six days of the week they do nothing, and on Sunday they go to the bull-fight.' Such is the awful charge I have heard brought against the inhabitants of Madrid. But something, after all, may be urged in favour of a bull-fight. It is a national, a royal amusement. Ferdinand the Seventh established a School of Tauromachia at Seville. Bull-baiting, too, is one of the oldest of English sports. Something approaching it used to take place in the streets of London every Monday morning, within very recent times, and until, indeed, the cattle market was removed from Smithfield to Islington, nay, even since the aforesaid removal, I have occasionally seen much sport got out of a lively young bullock between Farringdon-street and the Old Bailey to the imminent peril of Mr. Benson's shop windows. Perhaps there may be also a trifle to be said in favour of the bull-ring. You will not hear it said by *me*, for I have gone through my course of tauromachia, and hold a corrida de toros to be the most brutal, cruel, and demoralising spectacle to be seen on this lower earth, after the King of Dahomey's 'great custom.' Still there are people who like it.

So much for Bos; but who dares to defend cock-fighting? No one, I should hope. It is undeniably cruel, and as undeniably demoralising; since it leads, in England at least, to gambling and to the undue consumption of alcoholic liquors. Again, a cock-fight not unfrequently ends in a man-fight. That the heinous turpitude of the thing is deeply impressed on the English mind is obvious from the proverbial expression employed to denote anything unusually and superlatively profligate and audacious—that 'it beats cock-fighting.' Very properly, this barbarous sport has been put under the special ban of the English law. It is reached by the provisions of the act for the prevention of cruelty to animals, commonly known as 'Dick Martin's.' Lawyers, cunning of fence, have sometimes striven to show, in appeal cases, that the cock is not a domestic animal; but the judges all ranged in Westminster Hall—a terrible show—have decided that Chanticleer is as much an animal as a donkey; and more than one amateur of the cockpit royal has expiated his fondness for the gallinaceous tournament in county jail. There was that poor young Marquis, for instance, who indulged in the luxury of a private cock-fight in his own grounds on a Sunday morning. Soon did Nemesis, in the shape of a Society's constable, overtake that sporting peer. There was a terrible scandal. It is true that the marquis was not sent to the treadmill; but the case against him was proved, and his lordship, if I remember aright, was fined. That, at least, was some-

thing. I dwell the more particularly on this case, as, the moment I found cock-fighting and Sunday morning associated in the phrase I had penned, my ears began to tingle, and my cheek to blush with remorseful shame. Ah! I should be the last wretch in the world to moralise on the wickedness of cock-fighting, for, not many years since, I deliberately attended a cock-fight. It was on a Sunday morning, too. I may as well make a clean breast of it, and allow the whole sad truth to be known. I was born to be a 'frightful example' to the more virtuously disposed of my species; and I have little doubt that all the misfortunes I have since undergone, or which I may be doomed to undergo, spring directly from, or will spring from, that cock-fight. The only thing I can plead in extenuation is, that the combat I attended did not take place within the London bills of mortality, or within the sound of English church bells. The deed was done on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and on the coast of Africa.

I was at Algiers. I had just been reading in the English papers how a whole bevy of noblemen and gentlemen, disguised under the most plebeian aliases, had been arrested at a sporting public-house—Jemmy Somebody's—in London, and marched ignominiously through the public street to the police-court, where they were each fined five pounds: all for cock-fighting. The case against them was clear. The plumed bipeds, the metal spurs, the weights and scales, the

pit itself, had all been found, and duly produced in court by inexorable inspectors. It was shown that a great deal of money had been laid on the combat. 'Serve them right,' quoth a stern gentleman, to whom I read the report of the case. 'I'd have sent every man Jack of them to prison for six months, with hard labour.' This downright opinion was necessarily provocative of argument. Another gentleman present, a mild and genial person, remarked that he really did not see much harm in cock-fighting. The birds, he added, evidently liked fighting; and so long as the natural spurs only were used—— But the stern gentleman wouldn't hear anything in palliation of that which he termed an abominable and degrading exhibition of cruelty and ruffianism. It had now grown to be about twelve at noon; and it so fell out that Abdallah, the guide attached to the hotel, sent to ask, with his duty, what amusement the gentlemen would like to have provided for them that present Sunday: adding that a capital cock-fight was to come off at two o'clock precisely at the Café de l'Ancienne Kiosque, on the road to Moustafa Supérieur. We had been arguing so long on the pros and cons of cock-fighting, without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion, that Abdallah's proposition came upon us like the refreshing spray from a hydropult on a dusty day. The Gordian knot was severed. The stern gentleman and the mild gentleman, and your humble servant, were unanimous that the best thing to be done was to proceed to the scene

of action and compare notes on what we saw. So we hired a carriage and went off to the Café de l'Ancienne Kiosque. I beg to repeat that all this took place in Africa. In England we should not have dreamed of doing such a thing; nor, dreaming, should we have dared.

But it *was* Sunday. Long years have passed since, in pages precursors to those in which I now write, I was permitted to discourse on the aspect of Sunday in London, and on the different Sabbaths which men, in their pride, or their strict conscientiousness, or their sheer indifference, had made to themselves. I have spent five hundred Sundays in twenty different lands since I first took pen in hand and told how I had heard 'Sunday bands' playing in the Parks, how I had heard English mechanics enjoying their 'Sunday out' in suburban tea-gardens. And am I, or are you, or is our patron Society any nearer, now, the solution of the vexed question of how Sundays should best be spent, and which of our human Sabbaths is most acceptable to the Divine Ordainer of all things? That the seventh day, or the first day—for we are scarcely agreed as to whether it is properly number one or number seven—should not be spent in cock-fighting seems clear enough; but remember, again, that what I am telling of took place in Africa, in a country governed by a Roman Catholic power, numbering among its subjects Turks, Jews, heretics, fire-worshippers, and Pagan negroes. Man was made for the Sabbath, they tell you, grimly

scowling, north of the Tweed. The Sabbath was made for man, they hold in latitudinarian France, and even in Lutheran Germany. But how is a government to impose a Sabbath upon so many races of men, and of so many ways of thinking? Religious politics run as high in Algeria as elsewhere. The Mahometan Arabs call the Christians, dogs. The orthodox Turks are continually expressing a desire to defile the graves of the fathers and mothers of the heterodox Moors, and both concur in hating the schismatical Kabyles. The negroes are mere idolaters and Obeahmen. Turks, Moors, and negroes concur in loathing and despising the Jews. The Gallicans in Algiers hint that the catholicism of the Spaniards who colonise Oran is tinged with strange heresies and excessive Mariolatry; and the Maltese sailors resolutely refuse to pray to the Saints in the French calendar. The resident British community import tracts; try a little proselytism without any apparent results; squabble among themselves, and make no secret of their convictions that their neighbours are going to Jehanum. As for the Jews, they look upon Moslem and Nazarene alike, with the feelings, harboured from time immemorial; but harboured in an occult manner. And yet, amidst this confusion of mosques, cathedrals, chapels, synagogues, and Mumbojumbo houses, Trappish convents, and marabout koubbas, nobody in Algiers, extraordinary to relate, thinks of quarrelling or fighting about Sunday. Everybody enjoys his Sabbath as seemeth him best.

To what causes must the absence of dispute as to the observance of the Algerine Sabbath be ascribed? To the warmth of the climate? To the indolence or placability of the people? To the tolerance of the clergy? Scarcely, I conjecture. Hot as is the climate, and lazy the people, there are enough activity and energy about to make Sunday the noisiest day in the week. The clergy are just as intolerant as the authorities permit them to be; and the priests of one sect, not being allowed to burn or plunder those of another, console themselves by preaching against and cursing their neighbours. The real reason is, that a casting vote in all matters, secular or ecclesiastical, is given by the dominant power—by the eminently tolerant, unprejudiced, and unbelieving French government. I hope I am not libelling that government by hinting that, theologically, it is a little more than sceptical. Sunday is a day when everybody is allowed, and, indeed, expected, to make merry; and the Gaul being at bottom a lighthearted and mercurial soul, he sees nothing very wrong in the social organisation of a colony in which there are three Sabbaths instead of one.

I will not say that I pursued precisely this train of thought as the carriage bore us along the very dusty road leading to the Café de l'Ancienne Kiosque, and ultimately to Moustafa Supérieur; but the roadside was fertile in materials on which future reflections might be founded. It was Sunday out on the most extensive scale, and with the oddest combination of Oriental and European characteristics. Group

after group of French soldiers, military coveys of red-legged partridges, were scattered along the broad highway; and in the keen zest in which they were evidently enjoying their Sunday offered a very marked contrast to the English warriors whom you meet listlessly wandering about the streets of provincial towns, and whose mental condition never seems to me to extend beyond these stages: first, that of despair at not having money enough to get drunk; second, that of having it, and being drunk; third, that of having got sober, and wanting to get drunk again. The third stage is analogous to, but not identical with, the first. The British private, who has tasted the sweets of the beer-shop, is in a position more fully to appreciate the poetical reminder that the sorrow's crown of sorrow is in the remembrance of happiness. Ah! if under some blessed fiscal dispensation the English soldier could only be supplied with cigars three for a penny! He would still visit the canteen, I suppose; but I would lay any odds that he would not get tipsy half so often; that he would not be half so brutal, so stupid, or so disorderly; and that he would not find time hang with such awful ponderosity on his hands. Cigars three a penny! My panacea is a cheap one. I have but one addition to suggest: a theatre for twopence, in lieu of the filthy public-house and the blackguard music-hall. With cheap cigars and cheap theatrical amusements you would soon find a sensible diminution in your number of courts-martial, in the in-

mates of your barrack cells, and the number of your punishment drills, your extra guards, your stoppages, and your bloody stripes laid on the backs of poor brave fellows who get into trouble because they do not know what to do with themselves.* Cigars three a penny, I say, and *Box and Cox* for twopence, in preference to the 'Memoirs of Lieutenant Melchesidec Bethel,' that sainted subaltern of foot, or the 'Beatified Baggage-wagon Woman,' price thirteen shillings per thousand for distribution.

Cigars three a penny were very common in the mouths of the French warriors on the road to Moustafa Supérieur. Scarcely a private but had his cheap roll of tobacco; nor did his officers seem to be too proud to smoke cigars at the same price. Tobacconists in Algiers will sell you so-called Londres and Regalias at as high a price as you are foolishly willing to give; but the prices are essentially 'fancy' ones, and the cigars themselves but the sweepings of the French Régie.

Given a fine Sunday afternoon, and several hundreds of military men swaggering or strolling along in the direction of a café where a cock-fight is about to take place; the odds, in England, I opine, would be laid on all those military men being intent on witnessing the cock-fight in question. Did your betting lay that way in Algeria, however, you would lose. Every nationality here has its special and exclusive Sunday amusement; but cock-fighting is not one to which the French are addicted. 'Comment!'

* Flogging, thanks to Mr. Otway, exists no longer in our army.

they would cry. 'Spend two hours in seeing two miserable birds peck one another to pieces: mais c'est une horreur!' The Frenchman's Sunday means a long day of dawdling, of staring at shows and sights, of ogling pretty girls, of sipping moderate and thin potations, and of winding up at billiards or the play. The French officers have an occasional bout at partridge-shooting or pig-sticking, and, at outlying stations, can cultivate perilous laurels, if they choose, in hunting the lion; but ideas of 'Le Sport,' as it is understood in France, have not yet penetrated to Cæsarean Mauritania. Horse-racing languishes. Many of the Mahometan gentlemen have magnificent studs of thoroughbreds, but they decline to enter their full-blooded Arabs for plates unless the French owners of racehorses can exhibit a faultless pedigree with each of the horses they enter. And a racer must have a very long lineage to match with one in the studbook of an Arab sheikh. The native gentry, too, are great falconers; but the French scarcely know a hawk from a hernshaw, and usually regard a falcon as a kind of semi-fabulous bird, not often seen out of heraldic scutcheons, and which ladies used to wear on their wrists like bracelets some time in the dark ages. The Arabs understand cock-fighting, and among themselves can enjoy it keenly; but, on the whole, they prefer the contests of quails, and even of pheasants—which are here 'game' to the backbone, and desperately pugnacious —to those of cocks. Moreover, they never bet; and

to Europeans a cock-fight without money won and lost is as insipid as card-playing for 'love.' The real amateurs, aficionados as they call themselves, of cock-fighting are the Spaniards, of whom there are some thousands domiciled in Algiers, either as agriculturists, as mechanics, or as shopkeepers. They wear their national costume; speak very little French; scowl at the Arabs as though they were the self-same Moriscos whom they were wont to persecute in Spain; and have their own church and their own priests.

The jewellers' shops in Algiers are full of rudely fashioned representations in silver of human eyes, noses, arms, legs, and ears; and these I used to take at first as being in some way connected with the Mahometan superstition of the evil eye; but in reality they are votive offerings, and their chief purchasers are Spaniards, who devoutly hang them up on the altars of favourite Saints, in gratitude for their recovery from deafness, toothache, chilblains, ophthalmia, or otherwise, as the case may be. For the rest, these Algerine Spaniards, usually emigrants from Carthagena and Valencia, are peaceable citizens enough, and give the government but little trouble. They are honest, industrious, and eminently temperate—bread, garlic, tobacco, and cold water being their principal articles of diet. They occasionally indulge in stabbing affrays, when arrears of ill-feeling, arising from bygone cock-fighting and card-playing disputes, are cleared up; but as a rule the use of the knife is strictly confined to the family circle. Pepe has it

out with José, and then the thing is hushed up, and the swarthy gentleman who is taken to the hospital with a punctured wound beneath the fifth rib is reported to have accidentally slipped down upon an open knife as he was cutting the rind of a piece of cheese. They don't run mucks, and they seldom stab the gendarmes. They are inveterate gamblers and finished cock-fighters. The Maltese sailors, of whom there are usually a numerous tribe in Algiers, belonging to the speronares in port, are likewise enthusiastic admirers of the gallimachia; but the Spaniards, to cull a locution from the pit, 'fight shy' of the brown islanders. Your Maltese, not to mince matters, is a drunken, quarrelsome dog, fearfully vindictive, as lazy as a Duke's Hall Porter, and a great rogue. Rows are rare at Algerian cock-fights; but if ever a difficulty occurs, and the sergents de ville are called in, the Maltese are sure to be at the bottom of it.

Cafés, breweries with gardens attached, and dancing-saloons, are plentiful in the neighbourhood of Algiers. As the road grows crowded and more crowded with soldiers and sailors, with French workmen in blouses, and French farm-labourers in striped nightcaps and sabots; with German artisans with their blonde beards, belted tunics, and meerschaums; with little grisettes and Norman bonnes with their high white caps; with grave, *dusky* Spaniards in their round jackets, bright sashes, pork-pie hats, clubbed hair and earrings; with Greek and Italian

sailors, and fishermen from the Balearic Isles, all mingled pell-mell; with the Jews in their gorgeous habiliments, clean white stockings, snowy turbans, and shiny shoes; with the Jewish women with high conical head-dresses of golden filigree, and long falling veils of lace, and jewelled breastplates, and robes of velvet and rich brocade; with Arabs in white burnouses and flapping slippers, who stalk grimly onward, looking neither to the right nor to the left; with Berbers and Kabyles swathed in the most astonishing wrap-rascals of camel's hair, and goat's hair, and cowskin; with fez-capped, bare-footed, and more than half bare-backed Arab boys, shrieking out scraps of broken French; with Zouaves, so bronzed and so barbaric in appearance as to make one doubt whether they have not turned Mussulmans for good and all; with sellers of fruit, and sherbet, and dates, and sweetstuff, and cigars, and lucifer-matches, you begin at last to wonder whether the days of the Crusades have not returned, and whether this motley crowd, belonging to all nations, and jabbering all dialects, is not part of the enormous host whilom encamped at Jaffa or Ascalon. Surely the Duke of Bethlehem or the Marquis of Jericho must be somewhere hereabouts. Surely Richard of England must have patched up a truce with the Sultan Saladin, and the camp-followers of the Christian and the Saracen army must be making merry together. No; this is only an ordinary Algerine Sunday. It is the Christian Sunday, remember; but it is worthy of

remark that the Hebrews who had their Sabbath yesterday, and the Mahometans who had theirs the day before, do not evince the slightest disinclination to take an extra holiday on the real or Nazarene one.

The Café de l'Ancienne Kiosque was rather a tumbledown place of entertainment, and might have been easily mistaken for one of the inferior guinguettes outside the barriers, whither, in olden times, ere Paris, both outside and inside its barriers, had grown to be the dearest city in the world, one used to repair to drink petit bleu at eight sous the litre. The different nationalities were enjoying themselves, each after its peculiar fashion, at the Ancienne Kiosque. The burnoused Arabs were gravely squatting on the benches outside, paying a trifle, I suppose, to the proprietor of the café for that privilege; for they brought their own tobacco, and partook of no other refreshment. A noisy group of Frenchmen were wrangling over a 'pyramid' game of billiards—the once green cloth of the table tinted dun gray from long use and many absinthe stains, and grown as full of rents as poor Robin's jerkin. At the side-tables some sailors were drinking drams. Sailors are cosmopolitans in that respect. The Germans had a back yard to themselves, where they were playing ninepins and wallowing in drouthy draughts of bière de Mars. The cockpit was at the extremity of a long garden, originally laid out in the French or sham classical style, but where the indigenous and spiky cactus had long since had it all its own way, carrying

things before it literally with a high hand, and driving out the modest plants of Europe with sticks, and staves, and sharp-pointed knives. Next to the horse-armoury at the Tower, a grove of cactus is about the most formidable array of lethal-like weapons I know.

We paid a franc apiece, and were admitted into a square barn-like apartment, the walls whitewashed, and the roof supported by heavy beams. Within this quadrangle had been constructed a theatre, properly so called, consisting of twenty rows of seats, disposed one over the other in circles, and gradually widening in diameter as they ascended. You entered this theatre by means of ladders and trap-doors, of which there might have been half a dozen in the different grades of seats, and I may best explain my meaning by saying that the outside of the structure looked, from the floor of the barn, like a gigantic wooden funnel. The neck of the funnel was the cockpit itself. We climbed up to the highest range of seats, and, getting as close as we could to the two gendarmes who represented authority, looked curiously around and beneath. There was little fear of disturbance, however. The 'roughs' were not present that Sunday morning; indeed, we heard subsequently that it was Saint Somebody's day—a Maltese saint—and that the brown islanders were protracting their devotions at their own church. The Spaniards, who had all doubtless attended mass before eleven A.M., were the chief occupants of the theatre; and into it were crammed, tight as herrings

in a barrel, at least two hundred and fifty amateurs. Turn where you would, were visible the swarthy faces, bright black eyes, closely cropped whiskers, upper lips and chins blue from constant shaving, ear-lobes decorated with rings of gold, hair in clubs, in queues, in nets, and in bags, pork-pie or soft felt hats with rosettes, round shaggy jackets, loose neckerchiefs, and curiously-worked gaiters or embroidered slippers, so distinctive of the children of sunny Spain. They were all smoking. On such solemn occasions as bull-fights and cock-fights, the papelito or paper roll is accounted puerile and jejune, and the genuine weed or puro enjoyed. Such puros as were in a state of combustion here were probably not of the Algerine or three-a-penny species. They were big, black, odorous, and probably smuggled from the Peninsula. The company had obviously taken a good deal of garlic with their morning meal; and, if you will again be pleased to recollect that the month was May, and the country Africa, I need not enter into any details concerning the somewhat powerful aroma which issued from the two hundred and fifty amateurs. But a better behaved, a quieter audience I never saw. It is a pity they had not something worthier than a cock-fight in which to display their good behaviour.

I am so ignorant of the technology of cock-fighting as to be unaware of the precise meaning of a 'main;' but we saw five different battles between five brace of birds. They were, for the most part,

as game as game could be. One only—it was the third fight—a red long-legged fellow, 'El rubio,' as he was called in the betting, showed, figuratively speaking, the white feather. He essayed to run away from his adversary, and even to scale the walls of the pit; whereat there were dull murmurs among the auditory, and cries of 'Fuera!—fuera el rubio'—'Out with him!' His owner very speedily put an end to the growing discontent by jumping into the pit, seizing the recreant gladiator, wringing his neck, and stamping upon him. He then handed over a handful of dollars, his loss on the event, to the owner of the opposition bird, and philosophically lighting a fresh puro, regained his seat, and betted throughout the next fight on a white bird with a gray gorget.

Cockpit Royal! As I gazed on the fierce struggle, I could not but recall the mild Wordsworth's mellifluous description of Chanticleer under pacific circumstance:

> 'Sweetly ferocious round his native walks,
> Pride of his sister-wives, the monarch stalks;
> Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread,
> A crest of purple tips the warrior's head;
> Bright sparks his black and rolling eyeball hurls,
> Afar his tail he closes and unfurls.
> On tiptoe rear'd, he strains his clarion throat,
> Threaten'd by faintly answering forms remote.
> Again with his shrill voice the mountain rings,
> While, flapp'd with conscious pride, resound his wings.'

Are not the numbers melodious? Is not the description charming? Was there ever a prettier amplification of cock-a-doodle-do-o-o-o? But here he was—the

'monarch' 'sweetly ferocious'—with a vengeance. I have heard ere now the term 'pitted against each other,' and I know not what may have been formerly the practice in cock-fighting England; but in this Algerine pit there did not seem to be any need to excite the combatants for the fray. The two owners stepped into the arena, each with his bird in his hand. Solemn declarations were made and written down as to the ages and prior performances of the champions. Weights and scales were then produced, and the birds were duly weighed. The appointed judge subjected them to a minute examination. Their spurs and beaks were then rubbed with the half of a lemon; they were put down at opposite corners of the pit; and the owners, bowing to each other, went to their places. Not a cry, not a gesture, was used to excite the birds to the attack. There was a quiet walk round the pit; then a few sidelong looks, a careful mutual examination of the opposite party's general build and make-up; then a rush, a rise on the wings, another, another; then it seemed as though a small feather-bed had been suddenly ripped up, and the plumes scattered in all directions. Such a furious clapperclawing, such a tooth and nail exhibition of gameness! But not a crow was heard. Not a cry, not a gasp even of pain. The loudest sound audible was the rustling of feathers. Then the rivals would emerge from the downy cloud; stalk round the pit again; and eye and take stock of each other as before. Then would come rush number two, and another rise

and another furious clapperclawing. And so on, round after round for perhaps half an hour.

This volume not being *Bell's Life in London*, I am absolved from chronicling the minutiæ of the various rounds. In the first fight, I may remark that one of the birds, a black one, was defeated early. Time was called; he could not come up to it; he consequently lost the fight, and was put out of his misery, but not contumeliously, by his owner. The victor expired just as he was being handed over the barrier to his triumphant proprietor. The next duel was between a little gray fiend of a bird and a gaunt white creature of most doleful mien. How handicapping is managed in the Algerian Cockpit Royal I do not know; but there was evidently a great disparity in bottom and bone between these two. The pluck, however, of the gaunt white creature was indomitable. He grew rather wild after about eighteen minutes' clapperclawing, and staggered rather than walked round the pit: the little gray fiend strutting by his side, and ever and anon whispering in his ear, so it seemed, like an importunate bore; but in reality finding out fresh tender parts about the unhappy creature's head wherein to progue him with his sharp beak. It was very horrible to see this gaunt white creature *gradually turn first a streaky and then a complete crimson*, with the blood he lost. It was more horrible when both his eyes were gone, and blind and 'groggy,' but undismayed, he still went reeling about, occasionally closing with his enemy,

and clawing him. At last, in the twentieth round, I think, the little gray fiend coolly went up to the luckless white knight; looked in his face as though he were laughing in it; and with one trenchant blow of his beak cut the poor wretch's throat. I am sure, by the blood that spurted out, that the great artery had been severed. The white cock balanced himself for a moment on one leg, then threw back his head, gave one smothered 'cluck,' and as sharply as a human hand can be turned round from the position of supination to that of pronation, fell over dead, and turned his toes up. So may you have seen, in the shambles, a bullock stricken by the slaughterer's poleaxe. One stupid moment motionless he stands, as though all unconscious that his skull is cleft in twain, and that his brains lie bare. But anon the quicksilver current of dissolution searches every vein, and plumbs every nerve. The giant frame trembles; the legs give way; and the great beast topples over into so much beef.

Can any extenuation for the manifest cruelty of this sport be found in the fact that the birds in Spanish pits wear only their natural horny pedal protuberances or spurs? This, like everything else, is a moot point. The uninitiated generally jump at the conclusion that a fight with steel or silver spurs is much more barbarous than one without. These sharpened glaives, they argue, inflict the most hideous gashes. On the other side, it may be shown that when spurs are used, the fight is over much sooner;

and that spurs, besides, give an equality in weapons to the combatants. A bird may be of the same weight and age as his opponent, but much overmatched by him in adroitness and endurance; yet it will often happen that when apparently at the last gasp, the bird who is getting the worst of it may turn the tables by driving his spur into his enemy's brain.

To others I leave the task of drawing a moral from the tale I have told. As I went to the cock-fight, and it was Sunday, I am, so far as moralising is concerned, out of court.

CUAGNAWAGHA.

CUAGNAWAGHA! Cuagnawagha! it is but a word. I may plead, at least, that it is fertile in vowels, and has not the spiky chevaux de frise appearance, when written down, which Polish and Hungarian and others of the Sclavonic family (those quadrilaterals of orthography) present. To me, even Cuagnawagha looks pretty in black and white. I have adopted the spelling accepted by those who rule over Cuagnawagha, and are neighbours to it; but the Cuagnawaghians themselves are not much given to reading or writing.

Cuagnawagha! Cuagnawagha! will you agree in the premiss that there are certain words—the names of things and places, and sometimes, but very rarely, of men—the bare sound of which will haunt you? That they should do so is not always the result of the associations they recall. Windermere is close to Patterdale; yet the first is a name that haunts you, and is full of a soft and mysterious beauty. Patterdale is one of the loveliest spots in Europe, but its sound is harsh, severe, and ugly.

In all human probability, I shall never more behold Cuagnawagha—on this side the grave, at least.

On the other we may all see sights that shall astonish us. I was never in Cuagnawagha but once in my life; I only passed fifty minutes within its confines; I was thoroughly disappointed in all that I had come to see; yet Cuagnawagha, its name and itself, have haunted me from the day on which I first beheld it until this, and in my dreariest moments its dear name sweeps like soft music over the chords of my heart, and lights up the dim old Vauxhall of my twilight with thrice fifty thousand additional lamps. I do not know why. I have seen the lions of the world, their manes and their tails, and have heard them roar. I can gaze upon the ocean without addressing it as Vast, and Interminable, and Blue, and without bidding it Roll on—a request which, on my part, or any one else's, I hold to be one of surplusage, if not grossly impertinent. I have lost most of my enthusiasm about great rivers. I wait for the Ganges and the Indus, the Euphrates and the Amazon; but I have seen the Guadalquivir, the Ebro, the Tagus, the Rhône, the Rhine, the Mincio, and the Danube; but I am of opinion that the Thames at Ditton, in that priceless half hour between your ordering the stewed eels and the cutlets to follow and the arrival of the banquet itself, is brighter and more shining than any other river which I might have asked, again impertinently, to 'flow on.' The lions and the rivers, the cataract and the Alpine passes, are apt, indeed, to pall upon you when they are seen, not from choice but from necessity; and goodness gracious! how many miles would I willingly travel, and with peas in my

shoes, to get out of the way of an Old Master, or a connoisseur given to talking about one! I almost blush to recall the irreverent terms in which I heard one of her Majesty's Messengers allude, the other day, to that sublime chain of mountains, the exploration of which has been undertaken by an association of Climbing-boys, and whose peaks, passes, and glaciers are so fascinating to our landscape painters that they seem to be quite unaware of the existence of any more sublime mountain scenery in the world. The Queen's Messenger called the sublime chain those 'something' Alps. So might you, if you had to carry a bag across them twenty times a year, in hail, rain, or sunshine. But Cuagnawagha has not lost one iota of its primeval charms to me. My love for it is as fresh as—what shall I say?—as *your* love for the face you always love: for the face which, like that of Queen Victoria on the postage-stamps, never grows older. As it was in 1840, so is it in 1872, only younger, and fresher, and prettier (to you); so was it when your life began, so is it now you are a man, so may it be when you grow old. And I am sure, had Wordsworth ever seen Cuagnawagha, he would have written as melodiously about it as he has written of Grasmere or Dungeon-ghyll.

Cuagnawagha is only an unpretending little Indian village on the bank of the River St. Lawrence, over against the French village of La Chine, one of the earliest settlements of the Jesuit missionaries in Canada (and so called by them in affectionate reference to the

labours of which the *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses* are a record). It is some six-miles drive from the thriving and populous city of Montreal.

This is not, perhaps, the first time you have been told that there are no more genial and hospitable folks in British North America (where capital punishment will never be abolished, so far as killing with kindness is concerned), than the inhabitants of Montreal. The Canadians generally labour under a notion—not an entirely mistaken one, perhaps—that their brethren of the Old Country do not hold them in sufficient estimation; that the glare and bustle and sensational whirligig life of the United States offer greater attractions to English tourists who cross the Atlantic than the solid, steady, sober-sided existence of the British provinces. They have an idea that an Englishman travelling in the States gets rid of Canada at an early stage in his journey, or just looks in upon it at the fag end thereof, and that the real centres of his curiosity are in the cities of the Atlantic seaboard. The 'Kenucks,' and the 'Blue noses,' and the other provincials, murmur at this, but always in a placable and good-humoured manner. 'At least,' says Canada, 'the better half of Niagara belongs to us. At least, the Falls of Montmorency are equal to those of Gennessee; at least, the St. Lawrence is not inferior to the Ohio, and the Thousand Islands beat Boston Harbour. There is not on the whole North American continent a city so picturesque as Quebec; and if you are curious about redskins, we can show you plenty of Indians—fat,

copper-coloured, prosperous, and happy, instead of the gaunt, dwarfed, half-starved wretches who are being "improved" off the face of the earth by the restless Yankees.' These grievances, however, do not prevent the Montrealese from pressing the heartiest of welcomes on every stranger who comes within their gates. It is enough for them that he *is* a stranger, and they immediately take him in. He is asked out, systematically and stubbornly, to dinner. If he pleads previous engagements, he is asked whether Monday week or Tuesday fortnight will suit him; and the dinner comes due, and must be met, like a bill. The Amphitryons who cannot bag him for a dinner are fain to secure him for breakfasts or suppers or lunches. Then they drive him out in trotting-wagons in summer, and in sleighs in winter; they take him to the club and to the 'rink;' they wrap him up, as in buffalo-robes, with kind offices and generous deeds. When I say that my experiences of Montreal hospitality, on the last occasion of my visit to the Royal Town, included the gift of a roll of Canada homespun sufficient to make a couple of travelling suits, and the loan of a railway-car, combining sitting-room, bedrooms, smoking-rooms, and kitchen, in which I travelled at my ease many hundreds of miles, you will be enabled to infer that the people of Montreal are not in the habit of doing things by halves, and that when they say they are glad to see you, they mean it.

Hospitality has generally its price; and I have known more than one country where the price exacted

was slightly beyond the value of the article itself; but the terms on which kindness is obtainable in Montreal are not very onerous. You are not expected to praise everything you see, to make flowing speeches, or to write a book, declaring Lower Canada in general, and Montreal in particular, to be the grandest and most glorious country and city in the universe. Nor are you absolutely required to furnish the album of every young lady fresh from boarding-school, or *at* boarding-school, with autographs and cartes-de-visite, or to write scraps of poetry of your own composition (not to exceed thirty lines) on little bits of particoloured silk, to be returned, post-paid, to localities a thousand miles away, there to be sewn into patchwork counterpanes. Nor are you asked for opinions on the abstract questions of Woman's Rights, Moral Suasion, or International Law. You are only expected to eat a great deal; to pass the bottle; to go round the Mountain; to go through the Tube, and to visit Cuagnawagha. There are always plenty of kind friends, with knives, forks, bottles, carriages, and horses, to enable you to accomplish the first two feats. For the performance of the third, every assistance will be rendered you by the courteous officials of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada; and the Victoria-bridge at Montreal is, in its way, quite as great a wonder of the world as the Falls of Niagara. When you have dispatched that tremendous piece of engineering—when you have not only ridden through the tube on a locomotive, but walked through it, and inspected the identical rivet

driven into the iron by the Prince of Wales, the last of I know not how many millions—you have done all that is required of you in Montreal, with the exception of visiting Cuagnawagha. The name strikes you at once. What is it? where is it? you eagerly inquire. It is an Indian village, you are told, easily accessible. The best way is by road to La Chine, where you can obtain a canoe and be ferried across to the village itself. The very word 'canoe' sets you all agog to go. Sunday, your counsellors continue, is the best day for a visit to Cuagnawagha. The squaws are then in their best dresses, and the papooses or children are neat and clean, for the inspection of visitors. It was on a Saturday afternoon that I made an appointment with a hospitable friend to start for Cuagnawagha at noon on the morrow. All night I dreamt about it. A radiant chaos filled my sleep of moccasins and wampum-belts, of wigwams and medicine-men, of war-paint and calumets, of tomahawks and scalps, of fire-water and unburied hatchets, of gallant braves and beauteous squaws, of the Council Fire and the Happy Hunting-grounds.

Sunday morning dawned. It was a Canadian summer Sunday, which is perhaps saying enough; but our open carriage had a hood, and the day, though warm, was so beautiful that we felt it would have been a sin to remain at home. Perforce, however, so fierce was the glare of the sun, we lingered in the cool shades of the St. Lawrence Hall Hotel until two in the afternoon. To broil in Canada was with me a new sensa-

tion, for on the occasion of my last visit to Montreal, the thermometer had been at a whole flight of stairs below zero, and my tour round the mountain accomplished in a sleigh, with such a jingling accompaniment of bells as might have been envied by the celebrated female traveller to Banbury Cross. But why did she not attach the bells to the cockhorse instead of to her toes? There are but two changes of the seasons at Montreal; but they are pantomimic in their suddenness. I could scarcely believe that the Mr. Hogan who suggested iced sangaree, or a trifle in the way of a cobbler, ere we started for Cuagnawagha, was the same obliging host who, the last time I started from St. Lawrence Hall, had lent me the skin (seemingly) of a megatherium to wrap myself in, with a mighty fur cap, and a pair of sealskin gloves, like unto leviathan his paws, and had whispered that half way round the mountain there were some excellent hot 'whisky skins' to be obtained.

The drive to La Chine was not very interesting. Few drives in North America, save where the scenery is mountainous, can be said to possess much interest, picturesquely speaking. The farming is all doubtless in strict accordance with the precepts of Jethro Tull, great-grandfather of Anglo-Saxon husbandry; but to the European eye it looks shiftless and slovenly. The fields are too large (which would scarcely be a fault in the eye of a farmer); there are ugly posts and rails in lieu of hedges, and the trees are few. Gentlemen's houses, parks, and pleasaunces you never expect to

see. Add to this an all-pervading dust powdering the vegetation with the monotonous livery of Midge the miller, and those chronic Canadian nuisances, abundant turnpike-gates. There were plenty of cattle about, however, well bred and full of flesh, and the cottages along the road, although mainly of wood, had a substantial and satisfied appearance, as though they belonged to country folks who ate meat every day. I am inclined to think that meat twice, if not three times a day, would be nearer the mark, as the habitual dietary of the Canadian peasant or farmer, for they are both one here. Given a country where the babes and sucklings clamour for beefsteak at breakfast:—should not that country be a happy one?

There was the usual confusion of French and English nomenclature, and of Protestant and Romanist places of worship, and of people of Saxon and Celtic race along the road; but, as seems happily the case in Canada, the Gaul and the Saxon, the follower of Peter and the disciple of Martin, seemed to get on pretty well together. Fenianism was in an ugly embryo state when I was in Canada. It had scarcely got beyond its first fœtal squalling in its cradle in Chicago; and the Canadian Paddy, so far as I had any experience of him, was a jovial, easy-going mortal, civil to the Saxon, obedient to his rule, and passably contented with plenty of work and high wages. I am inclined to hope, and even to believe, that the outburst of Fenianism—now grown from a fretful wail to a frantic howl notwithstanding—the kind of Paddy

(the contented one) I have mentioned, is still in a majority in Lower Canada. What he may be in the West, I am rather chary of opining. On this present Sunday he was evidently, so far as his patronage of French and English public-houses went, wholly free from prejudice. 'The Queen's Arms' and 'Les Armes d'Angleterre' were all one to him. I could not help thinking, as we saw these hybrid taverns, that half-and-half should properly be the only beverage sold there; and when I passed a knot of scarlet-coated British Guardsmen issuing from a wayside hostel, I fancied an international version of the old nursery rhyme:

'Qui est là?
A grenadier.
Où est votre argent?
I forgot.
Allez-vous en, ivrogne!'

Conversations closely resembling the above were certainly audible from time to time when the Guards were in Canada. Happy was it when they were content to demand a 'pot of beer' in lieu of the atrocious 'white eye,' and the abominable 'fixed bayonets'—the cheap whisky, or cheap hell-fire of Canada. Not that the Guardsman was given in any marked degree to misbehave himself. He did not get tipsier, or with greater frequency, than his cousin of the line does in Gibraltar. He was much more sober in Canada than he is, generally, in London. The Guards were deservedly popular with the people of Montreal, and went home 'as fit as fiddles.' Many obtained their

discharge while in America, and married and settled in the province. They must have been quick about their sweethearting; but next to a sailor's, is there anything shorter than a soldier's courtship? Three Sundays might be given as a fair average. Let us take a virtuously inclined corporal. A regiment, we will say, disembarks on a Saturday night; on the first Sunday afternoon you will meet your virtuously inclined corporal walking down Notre-Dame-street with a young lady in a three-dollar shawl and a two-dollar bonnet. The next Sunday, if you happened to be passing down Bonaventure-street, you might catch a glimpse of the virtuously inclined corporal taking tea with the entire family of his innamorata; cutting the bread-and-butter, carving the ham, nursing the married sister's baby, or handing the old grandsire a light for his pipe. And on Sunday number three, you heard that Corporal Smith had got leave to be married to a 'kenuck.' How do they manage it, these wonderful military men? What inflammatory quality is there in their scarlet coats to set maidens' hearts ablaze so? How many weary months, years perhaps, did it take you to win the present Mrs. Benedict? Mind, I can't help thinking, that if civilians would adopt the short sharp mode of military courtship, the girls would meet them half way. I heard of a train breaking down once on the Camden and Amboy Railroad, and before a fresh locomotive could be brought to its assistance no less than three offers of marriage were made and accepted among the passengers. And,

did you ever hear of a courtship more expeditious than that of the mystic William Blake, *pictor ignotus?* He had had some great trouble. 'I pity you, William,' remarked a young lady. 'Then I am sure I love you with all my heart,' quoth William Blake; and they went off and got married at once. But if she had not added the endearing 'William' to the expression of pity, that young lady might never have become Mrs. Blake.

There was not much to remind one of the Celestial Empire at the clean little village of La Chine. It was nearly all French. The hotel, or tavern, was, as usual, half and half. The little sanded parlour was decorated with portraits of Queen Victoria and the late Duke of Wellington, side by side with a Madonna and Child, and his Grace the Archbishop of Quebec, in full canonicals, and the *Montreal Herald* lay on the table cheek by jowl with *L'Echo du Canada.* A French servant-maid brought us some English beer; and on our expressing a desire to hire a canoe, the Scotch landlord hailed two boatmen, one of whom was an Indian and the other an Irishman, to 'pole' us across to Cuagnawagha. It only wanted a raven, and a cage, and the celebrated professor of Trafalgar-square, to make the exhibition of the Happy Family complete.

We crossed the magnificent river: at this point far enough from the La Chine Rapids to be lying calm in the sun, like one sheet of burnished gold. There was no awning to the canoe, and a Venetian

gondola would perhaps have been preferable as a conveyance; but there was something after all in riding lightly on the bosom of the famous St. Lawrence in a real canoe of birch bark, with a real Red Indian at the stern. I will say nothing of the Irishman at the prow, for he rather detracted from the romance of the thing. A Canadian voyageur now, softly murmuring 'La Complainte de Cadieux,' or chanting in lugubrious tones the fearful history of Marie Joseph Corriveau and the iron cage of Quebec: such an oarsman would have left nothing to be desired. You must get on to the Ottawa river ere you can catch your voyageur. The Irishman and the Indian did not attempt the 'Row, Brothers, Row,' or any other variety of the Canadian boat-song. It was worth coming a good many miles, however, to hear the Irishman endeavour to make himself understood in the French tongue by the Redskin, and that noble savage, not to be behindhand in courtesy, endeavouring to talk English to the Irishman. I must not omit to mention that the noble savage wore a pea-jacket and a billy-cock hat, and informed us that, in addition to the skill and dexterity with which he feathered his oar, or rather his pole, he was 'one dam good pilot.'

As the opposite shore was approached, the navigation became somewhat difficult, and the channel rather a matter to be faintly hoped for than confidently fixed upon. Several times we were, as I thought, within an inch of being 'snagged'—the 'snags,' in this case, not being trunks of trees, as on the Missis-

sippi, but sharp-pointed fragments of rock. However, the Indian successfully guided us through the watery labyrinth, and in some degree justified his claim to the title of 'one dam good pilot.' There were more rocky fragments on the bank; indeed, the littoral of the St. Lawrence, opposite La Chine, might remind the Eastern traveller of the shores of Arabia Petræa; and the quarter-of-a-mile walk or so, lying between the river and the village, was, to one of the visitors to Cuagnawagha, of a gouty constitution, and to another with tight boots, and to a third with bunions and an irritable temper, agonising.

We brought up at last in a long straggling street, or rather lane, of hovels built of loose stones and planks nailed together in apparently as loose a fashion. Here and there, perhaps, a little mud had been used to finish off the corners, or stick on the chimney-pots; but looseness was the prevailing characteristic of the street architecture. When I call these dwellings hovels, I use the word in no offensive sense. They were hovels in construction, but exceedingly clean, and abundantly furnished. The doors and windows were all wide open, and the domestic arrangements of the inhabitants of Cuagnawagha were almost as fully exposed to public gaze as those of a doll's-house in Mr. Cremer's London shop-windows. As the majority of the houses comprised only one room, the publicity given to the domesticity of the place may be more easily understood. They were, as I have hinted, supplied with abundant chattels.

I saw more than one four-post bedstead, several easy-chairs, and any number of profusely ornamented tea-trays. Next to these, the most fertile product of Cuagnawagha appeared to be babies. I could not at first make out what had become of the children of medium growth, nor of the seven-year olds up to the ten-year olds; but I learnt subsequently that the elder ones were at church, and the younger at play in the cemetery. In Cuagnawagha itself the babies ruled the roast. They were very fat—of a rich oily fatness indeed, and, in the ridiculous swaddling-bands in which they were enveloped, looked not unlike very little sucking-pigs seen through reddish-brown spectacles. But all the babies I saw were, I am pleased to say, immaculately clean. Those who had any hair, had it of a lustrous raven hue, such as Horace Vernet has put on the head of the baby Napoleon, in that exquisite vignette where the hero is depicted, naked, and one hour old, sprawling on a fragment of tapestry. Their black eyes, too, had a merry twinkle; and altogether their coppery hue was not unpleasing, and they were the nicest babies I had seen for many a long month. In Cuagnawagha a baby is called a 'papoose;' and a solemn rite, the performance of which is exacted from all strangers, is that the papooses should be kissed. I had been warned in Montreal that the maternal squaws of Cuagnawagha were sometimes actuated by mercenary motives in offering their babes to the caresses of tourists; and that the request, 'Anglis, kiss papoose,' was not unfrequently followed

by another, 'Give little quarter'—meaning twenty-five cents. I took a provision of small money with me—the newest and brightest I could procure; but the mothers of Cuagnawagha were that day in no mercenary mood. At least, they did not actually beg for money. They clapped their hands for joy, and the papoose crowed in unison whenever we did present them with a backshish; so that, on the whole, in this lane full of copper-coloured babies we had our money's worth and more. We would no sooner halt at an open threshold than cheery voices, in an amazing jargon of French and English, invited us to walk in. If we hesitated about intruding, the inevitable papoose, tightly swaddled and strapped on to a board, like a diminutive Egyptian mummy, was handed to us through the window. A gipsy woman of felonious tendencies might have made a fortune in ten minutes' perambulation of Cuagnawagha, by running off with the papooses thus offered on trust; only, as the gipsies are said to steal only Nazarene children, and the Red Indians themselves are by some ethnologists supposed to be of kin with the gipsies, those Zingarini persons might not have cared, perhaps, about stealing their own flesh and blood.

I was given to understand afterwards that these Indians of Cuagnawagha were a very industrious and well-to-do community. The men hunted and fished, and were boatmen and river pilots; the women stayed at home, took care of the papooses, and filled up their time by making baskets and creels, and embroidering

those exquisite moccasins, slippers, pouches, fans, wampam belts, and other articles of bead and feather work which are so much in request in the fancy bazaars of Montreal and Quebec, and for which the retail dealers charge such exorbitant prices. The squaws of Cuagnawagha have certain market days for the disposal of their manufactures. On these occasions they are conveyed by their lords in canoes of birch bark across the river, and may be seen, with their black hair abundantly oiled, and their persons spruced up in infinite Indian finery, gliding from shop to shop in the most frequented streets of Montreal, in strange contrast to the European costumes around them. I did not hear that the Indians of Cuagnawagha, male or female, were much given to the consumption of fire-water, or to quarrelling or pilfering, or to the other generic weaknesses of the noble savage when in a state of free nobility and nastiness. I did not see any liquor-shop in the place. The domestic affairs of the village are administered by a chief—John or Peter, or Big Bellows or Bear's Paw, was, I think, his name—but it does not matter now—who was reported to have done uncommonly well in the fur trade, and to be worth many dollars. I had the honour of an interview with this Sachem, who was sitting, after the manner of his subjects, at his open door, in a Windsor chair, and smoking the calumet of peace—an ordinary tobacco-pipe, containing, as I was led to infer from the odour, birdseye. He was old, and immensely fat, but very

affable. He showed me a pair of the most beautifully embroidered moccasins I had ever beheld. Not to mince the matter, they served as coverings to his own stout legs and feet; but nothing could exceed the courteous manner in which he cocked up his bead-worked limbs on the window-sill, and allowed me narrowly to inspect, and even to smooth and pat them. The Sachem's house was so full of chattels that it looked like a broker's shop; and the name of his tea-trays was legion. He wore on his breast, and was evidently exceedingly proud of, a silver medal, bearing the effigy of King George the Fourth, and had, so far as I could make out, served at some remote period in the local militia. He had the usual twin engravings over his mantelpiece—the Madonna and the Queen of England, and was a stanch Conservative and a devout Roman Catholic. So I left him, never to behold him more, in this semi-ignored corner of the world, so close to civilisation, and yet so far from it. He was sitting under his own vine and his own fig-tree; and who was there to make him afraid? Not the British Government, surely, whose rule over these honest folks is mild, and equitable, and protective; not the Pope of Rome, assuredly. In Lower Canada, the Roman Catholic religion seems to have lost the terrifying character which it is apt to assume elsewhere. The priest neither bullies, nor teases, nor grinds the faces of his parishioners. He is their master; for he is lawyer, arbitrator, journalist, schoolmaster, letter-writer, match-maker, guide, philoso-

pher, and friend, all in one; but his spiriting seems to be done with infinite gentleness, and he is certainly beloved by a population who, but for his quietly paternal despotism, would very likely be drunken, and savage, and profligate, and not peaceable, and affectionate, and docile.

At one extremity of the village street there was a church, a bare structure of considerable antiquity, highly whitewashed. The irregular area before this edifice seemed to be the general trysting-place of the young squaws and the young braves of Cuagnawagha, who were sweethearting after the manner of young squaws and young braves the whole world over. The braves, I am sorry to say, had repudiated the slightest approach to Indian costume, and in the round blue jackets and glazed hats which they mostly affected, had somewhat of a sailor-like appearance. They were pure redskins, however, and half-castes were rare. Now a Red Indian in a blue jacket and a round glazed hat sounds rather anomalous and incongruous. Where were the feathers, and the war-paint, and the tattooing? Not at Cuagnawagha, certainly. You must go much farther west if you wish to see the noble savage in his full native splendour and squalor; and even in the wildest districts the Indian rarely fails to supply himself with a European outfit whenever he has an opportunity to do so. I remember a hard-hearted, but withal very amusing speculator from down East, telling me of a gambling transaction he had had with an Indian somewhere in the territory of

Colorado. 'The cuss,' he observed, 'had been tradin' hosses, and bought a lot of store clothes. There he was, in a stove-pipe hat, a satin vest and a coat and pants most handsome. We took drinks; and I kinder froze to him till I had him comfortable over draw-poker in the verandah of the Cummin's House. Sir, in the course of three hours and three quarters I won of that Ingin all the money he'd got from tradin' hosses, and all his clothes, from the crown of his hat to the soles of his boots. Sir, it was very hot; and, lawful sakes! it was a sight to see that Ingin, a child of Adam, and as bare as a Robin, a walking away solemn, perspirin' with rage in the rays of the setting sun, and *looking like a hot roast turkey.*' The hot roast turkeys of Cuagnawagha had not yet been plucked of their feathers by speculators from down East, direct lineal descendants of the cunning man of Pyquag who questioned Anthony Van Corlear the trumpeter out of his horse.

But O! the squaws of Cuagnawagha. The elder squaws were unutterably hideous; so they prudently stayed at home, and minded the papooses. The younger squaws were here, philandering. Such mellow brunettes did I see, with nature's pure carmine mantling upon their dusky cheeks. Such lustrous blue-black tresses. Such liquid, lingering, longing eyes. If their foreheads had not been quite so low, and the chiselling of their mouths not quite so square, many of these girls would have been positively beautiful. Their figures, in early youth, are very shapely

and graceful, and their gait a strictly 'gliding' motion, as I noted above. A lady of our party admitted that they walked prettily, but that they turned their toes in. Another critic discovered that they walked on tiptoe, in consequence of the wretched condition of the pavement. I could only notice that they glided; that their ankles were faultless, and that they were exquisitely shod. Moccasins they may have worn on week-days; this Sabbath their pretty feet were arrayed in brodequins and bottines of varnished and bronzed leather, of soft kid, and even of bright-coloured silk and satin. Otherwise, there was little European in their costume. Crinoline had not yet invaded Cuagnawagha. There was an upper garment, which was the inner garment—the innermost garment, in fact—snowy white, leaving the arms bare, but very maidenly and modest. This was all they had for bib, or tucker, or bodice. Then came a petticoat falling in straight heavy folds, and decorated round the bottom with three or four rows of ribbons, the whole offering a close resemblance to the garment known in operatic wardrobes as the 'Amina skirt.' Over all, and covering the head, was a long mantle, in shape somewhat like a priest's cope—a square of fine broadcloth, of yellow, of red, or of black, and adorned with curious patchwork embroidery. The lady critic above mentioned complained that they went about with drawing-room table-covers over their heads; but what will not lady critics say? Such were the squaws of Cuagnawagha. Their necklaces

and armlets of beads, 'their ribbons, chains, and ouches,' I need not dwell upon. As for their manner of receiving the addresses of the young braves, it was remarkably like that which, on previous occasions, I have observed in Kensington Gardens, in many private parlours, and on some staircases.

We were turning our faces towards the shore again, when there issued from one of the hôvels a procession which we could not choose but follow. It was the funeral train of a little child. As at a Turkish funeral, the assistants came along at the double quick, but not jostling and hallooing as the Turks, or at least the Arabs, do. The men were first, absolutely running, but with that grave concentrated expression in their faces, of which only Indians and Breton peasants seem masters. Then came a squad of squaws; and then, alone, the mother of the dead child, bearing in her own arms—whose could be better?—the tiny corpse, which was in a species of wicker pie-dish, adorned with innumerable streamers of rainbow-hued ribbon, and strips of cloth. A bevy of dusky children, capering but silent, brought up the rear. We followed this curious train into the church, and I went up into a rickety gallery, and looked down on the coffin of the poor little papoose stranded in the midst of a big bier in the chancel, like a pincushion in a brewer's vat. The priest came, with his cross-bearer, and his acolytes and tapers and holy water, and the service for the dead was chanted; but in the midst of a timid quavering of the 'Dies Iræ,' there

burst from the hitherto silent assemblage a prolonged and harrowing wail. It rings in my ears even now; and I can see the Indian women on their knees on the church pavement, rocking themselves to and fro, and howling dismally. It was savagery asserting itself. It was as the voice of the wild animal in the depths of the forest, mourning for her cubs.

We followed the train again, away from the church and to the cemetery, and saw the papoose comfortably stowed away, gay-ribboned pall and all, in a quiet corner where the grass grew tall. Sleep soundly, O papoose; thou art well out of a troublous world. Then we came back to the shore, and took boat and sped across the great river, and saw the last of Cuagnawagha. And many and many a time, in far distant lands, have I recalled the rocky shore, the fat old chief, the gliding squaws, and the dead papoose with its rainbow pall.

LITTLE OLD MEN.

Error and I may be twin brothers; but still I cannot help fancying that the age in which we live exhibits a sensible decline in the average number of Little Old Men, walking and talking in their appointed time and their allotted section of infinite space.

You, I, all the world, must remember how plentiful little old men used, or at least seemed, to be when we were young. Almost all of us must have had little old grandfathers, little old uncles, and especially little old godfathers, who were in the pleasant habit of presenting us with guineas on our birthday, or pot-bellied silver watches, and of treating us to the play at Covent Garden Theatre. 'No play for you to-night;' that *was* a dire threat indeed in the golden age of the Rejected Addresses, when we, perchance, imperilled our prospect of dramatic entertainment by thrusting our little sister's doll between the bars and melting off half her nose. It appears to me that the children of the present age, when they go to the play at all, take their parents and guardians instead of being taken; and as for little old godfathers and their birthday presents, it

is in the first place patent that the sponsor, as a philanthropist, is all but extinct, that when you meet your godfather he usually crosses to the other side of the street to avert the possibility of being compelled to ask you to dinner, and that the only notice your godmamma ever takes of you is to beg autographs and cartes-de-visite, or to solicit your 'well-known extensive influence' in procuring a nice little Indian appointment, or something of that kind, for her son Ulric, aged twenty-seven, and a born fool.

Presents! When you are grown up, they want gifts from you; when you are small, and they must perforce give you something, it is generally something cheap from the Lowther Arcade, or else a two-shilling book bound in pink calico with Dutch-metal binding, setting forth how happy Frank and Willy and Herbert were at Concord House, or Euphuism Academy, with an Alexandre harmonium to perform upon, and a vivarium to amuse them out of school, under the benevolent auspices of Dr. Wise, the schoolmaster, and Mr. Loveboy, his assistant (who eventually goes into the church, and becomes Bishop of Bungaree, Central Africa). Nothing is ever said about Dr. Muff, or Mr. Canechild, or Professor Screwboy, or Mr. Swindleparent, B.A. These books are generally written by schoolmasters for the purpose of puffing (often in the most undisguised manner) middle-class schools. There were books about schools and schoolboys, too, in the little old godfather days, but they were lifelike and true. Dr. Prosody was a kind

pedagogue, and patted Harry on his flaxen head when he gave his pocket-money to the blind fiddler, or behaved so nobly in not betraying his playfellows in that matter of the rifled orchard; but what a tremendous flogging he administered to the traitor Philip, who should have confessed his share in the apple robbery, but allowed Harry to be brought within an inch of the 'horse' for his (Philip's) misdeeds! I say that godfathers and godmothers have degenerated into mere simulacra. They accept an awful responsibility with as much alacrity—and, as a rule, with as much sincerity—as the gentlemen who were wont to pervade Westminster Hall with straws in their shoes, and were ready to go bail for anybody, and to any extent, for half-a-crown. When we were young our sponsors made much of us, and left us fat legacies. I was blessed with one—a very little old gentleman who used to come from Finchley to Paddington once a month for the express purpose of hearing me my catechism. What has become of the conscientious people who used to renounce Satan and all his works, and the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, for you?

I walk down Chancery-lane, and dive into the mouldy yards of the Inns of Court; I peep up staircases fretting with the dry rot; I lift the musty curtains at the portals of the Great Hall of Pleas, and wander from the King's Bench to the Exchequer, from the Common Pleas to the Lords Justices; but I can discern no sign of the little old lawyer

once so familiar to me. What has become of him? Was he esteemed an intrinsic part and parcel of Mesne Process, and so swept away by my Lord Brougham? Did he fade away and die of grief when the Petty Bag, the Pipe, the Pells, and the Palace Court were abolished? By the little old lawyer, of course, I mean the practitioner who is either attorney or solicitor. The barrister is, and has always been, in nine cases out of ten, a big man, addicted to profuse whiskerage. Now and then you see a little counsel at the Chancery Bar, but you can discern at a glance that he is not strong enough for Common Law, and that at the Old Bailey the jury—who like quantity, not quality, in counsel—would make light of him. He is only fit to descant, in a thin piping voice, on the infringement of a patent right in the matter of a fishtail-burner, and to quote precedents out of books well-nigh as big as himself. There is a play by Massinger, called the *Little French Lawyer;* and the hero, who is almost a dwarf, is an advocate; but then you must remember his nationality, and that in his days the line of demarcation between barristers and attorneys was not very strongly drawn. His name, La Writ, shows this.

The little old lawyer *I* knew was never at the bar. He lived in Lincoln's-inn-fields, or dwelt over his offices in Bedford-row. He wore hair-powder, a large bunch of seals at his fob, and was frequently given to knee-shorts. He delighted in a neatly-plaited shirt-frill, and a petrified-looking brooch,

that might have been a fossil oyster, secured in some bygone lawsuit (plaintiff and defendant got the shells), or the desiccated heart of a client. His blue bag was of immense size. He knew what old port wine was, and kept plenty of it in the cellars under the clerks' office; nay, frequently, some was to be found of the right sort, with a bag of biscuits from Moxhay's, in one of the tin office boxes, labelled B— and Co. He never discounted bills, but lent money in the good old-fashioned way, on bond. He thought the Lord Chancellor the greatest of living beings, and ranked next to him, perhaps, his lordship's train-bearer.

Sometimes he was a country lawyer, and then you may be sure that he lived in that comfortable red-brick house — the best, next to the rectory, in the village — with the flaming brass plate, like a brazen capias, on the door. He wore drab cords then, and gaiters, and was generally admired as a hard rider cross country. When he came to town, he stopped at the Gray's-inn Coffee-house; and was fond of seeing the *Gamester*, at Drury-lane. The little old lawyer, in town as well as country, has almost disappeared. If your fancy, however, leads you to the cultivation of funerals, like poor crazy Lord Portsmouth, who was so fond of 'black jobs,' you may sometimes see the little old lawyer's frosted poll peering from the windows of a mourning coach, when a great lord or a rich dowager is going to the grave. Perhaps in one out of a hundred lawsuits which

chances to be conducted with something like honour and gentlemanly feeling on either side, you may find the little old lawyer concerned for one or the other party. But he is growing very rare. In vain may you sweep the attorneys' table in the law courts, in the hope of lighting on his trim sable figure, his powdered head, and his gold-rimmed spectacles, his shrewd spirit looking through his clean withered face and many-puckered wrinkles, 'with eyes of helpful intelligence, almost of benevolence.' In his stead what do you behold? Big fat lawyers with hoarse voices, who evidently sit in no awe of the judge, and patronise counsel in the most overbearing manner. Flash attorneys, who drive dog-carts, and bet, positively bet. Worse than all of these, the dandy young attorneys, with hair parted down the middle, pioneers' beards, eye-glasses, turn-down collars, guard-chains with lockets and trinkets attached, peg-top trousers, and shiny boots. Woe for the day when the Avvocati del Diavolo, when the protégés of St. Nicholas, take to varnishing their boots and scenting their pocket-handkerchiefs! I have seen some of these degenerate youths—not articled clerks, mind, but full-blown attorneys—walking down to Westminster with a bundle of papers in one hand, and a cigar in the other. The melancholy change that has come over a once solemn and demure profession, cannot be better summed up than in remarking that nothing is more common now than to see lawyers at the Opera and in the ranks of the Volunteers.

When I had chambers in Deadman's-inn, there was a real little old lawyer, who had his offices at Number Nine. He arrived every morning punctually at ten, in a yellow fly—not a brougham, be it understood—from Balham, the locality of his country-house. It was my great delight to watch for his arrival, and see him alight from the yellow fly. It was all there: hair-powder, watch-fob and seals, knee-shorts—no, as I live, pantaloons and hessians! big blue bag, shirt frill, petrified brooch, large diamond ring on his fore-finger (presented to him A.D. 1818, in the condemned cell, Newgate, by Mr. Montmorency Fluke, the celebrated forger, for whom he was concerned), and beaver hat, turned up just at the slightest angle of flection at the brim. 'This is a man,' I used to say, with great respect, to myself, 'who can remember forty shilling arrests, thirty years' long Chancery suits, and Monday hanging mornings, with a dozen victims. The Fleet and the Rules of the Bench, the seventy Commissioners in Bankruptcy, and the Court of Pie Powder; John Doe and Richard Roe, John a'Nokes and John a'Styles, sticks and staves, and justification of sham bail;—he has been familiar with all these mysteries now gone into irrevocable limbo.' And as I looked upon the little old lawyer I sighed; for, alas! he was very, very old, and came down to the office more by habit and for peaceful recreation than anything else. The suing and selling-up is now done by his sons and partners, one of whom is six feet high, and as hirsute as Julia Pastrana, while the

other is poetical and plays the flute. I have chambers in Drybones'-inn now, and have not as yet found one little old lawyer.

There was much that was good about another little old man—the schoolmaster. It is true that, as an educational means, he thought a birch the very best thing in the world, and next to that a cane, and next to that a strap; but he was not without some capacity for teaching, and some faculty of understanding, his boys; he struck, but he heard. Some modern preceptors are so much in the habit of talking about themselves, that it is with difficulty the scholar gets a word in. There is a charming figure of the little old schoolmaster, in as charming a picture by Mr. Mulready, in the Sheepshanks' Collection—a spare, pale, thoughtful pedagogue, severe you may be sure, but just, and willing to hear both sides. He has made his appearance at the close of a fiercely contested bout at fisticuffs, and is solemnly tweaking the boy who has been denounced by his schoolfellows as bully and aggressor in the fray, by the ear. That boy's defence, if he can make any, will be listened to, but I will wager that ere the sun goes down—and it is declining—he will be led off to the little old schoolmaster's study and scourged. Now and then, in remote country places, you may still come upon the little old schoolmaster, in rusty black, and sometimes with a red nose, who officiates as parish clerk, sings a capital comic song, has written a satire upon the squire, and indites love-letters for the village maidens.

But he is rapidly ceding to the influence of the trained schoolmaster, with all kinds of uncomfortable certificates, and the bloom of Privy Council patronage upon him.

And the little old doctor. Ah! there is corn in Egypt. All is not barren. The diminutive veteran of medical science still flourishes. I am myself one of the most prejudiced of mankind, and I confess that I don't like my doctors when young or large. If the former, I ask querulously what they know about my stomach? They are not old enough to have a stomach of their own. If the latter—if they run large, and are muscular and good-looking—I fancy they are too much occupied in boating, or cricketing, or spouting, or riding, or flirting, to devote the proper quota of time to study and experiment. I have known many doctors who were expert photographers. In my captious way, I always contended they would have been much better employed in dissecting frogs. We want a doctor to know all about the inside of things, not their exterior. May he not take a turn at his camera during his leisure time? it may be asked. A doctor has no right to any leisure. When fatigued with study, let him seek out a brother medico and amicably converse upon the arrangement of nuclei, or the different processes of the central lamella of the ethmoid bone. Let him descant upon frigorific mixtures or compound mercurial liniments. Had John Hunter any leisure? Had Astley Cooper, had Abernethy, had Bichât, had Esquirol? Look at

that wonderful Monsieur Majendie, who, in his odd moments, vivisected cats, dogs, and rabbits—pour se distraire.

Again, large doctors make a noise in the sick-room, handle you roughly, and talk loud. Give me a little old man for a physician. I don't care if he be old enough to have killed my grandmother. I say, when I am sick, 'This withered bright-eyed little old Sage has brought hundreds of children into the world, has seen hundreds of strong men die, has saved hundreds of others who were in worse case than I. Let him work his will with me. He is not a fool. He must have seen much, learnt much, and must know more.' In matters of surgery I admit that I don't stand out for age and size. When amputation be unavoidable, the Colossus of Rhodes may as well cut off your leg as a pigmy.

So great a change has come emphatically over the *face* of English society since the momentous question, 'Why shave?' was mooted some years since in *Household Words*, that very nearly all the ancient landmarks and types of outward character are as lost as the books of Livy. When I state that the porter of the Strand Union Workhouse in London wears a luxuriant beard, that pawnbrokers, railway guards, and linendrapers' assistants have burst out in moustaches, and that my bootmaker called upon me the other morning with a 'goatee,' the extent to which abundant hairiness has changed the aspect of polite society will be readily understood.

Orson is everywhere, Valentine nowhere. Love levels ranks; but beards give to modern English humanity as uniform a facial cast as may be seen in that famous regiment of the Russian guards twelve hundred strong, all the privates of which have snub noses, and the field-officers alone are permitted to be nasally Roman. The little old gentlemen one meets in easy life have, as a rule, abandoned themselves to the beard mania, and to me are little old gentlemen no more. When I see grizzled beards wagging beneath their little noses and spectacles, my thoughts revert with anything but favourable impressions to the gardens of the Zoological Society, and the inmates of certain cages I have seen there. Upon my word, I saw a little old Reverend, Fellow of his College too, with a beard, but three weeks since. No wonder that *Essays and Reviews* run through so many editions, and that heterodoxy is rife in the land!

By little old men I do not mean dwarfs. There is the usual number of those afflicted persons to be seen about; and an elderly dwarf is the usual merry sprightly musical little fellow, or else the (nearly as usual) spiteful malevolent snapping and snarling little nuisance. No, no; the little old men I seek and so rarely find are the dapper, symmetrical, clean-limbed personages who, for grinning and bowing, for smirking and simpering, for fetching ladies' cloaks and putting on their own goloshes, for slapping giants on the back even if they stand on tiptoe to do it, for poking people in the ribs, and seeing the hardest drinkers out at a

carouse, were inimitable and unequalled. They were almost always valiant little men, too, choleric, peppery, tremendous fire-eaters, often lugging about huge cases of duelling-pistols. How they snapped off the noses of tavern waiters! How they put their arms akimbo and beat hackney-coachmen off their own ground by slanging them down! In argument it was difficult to find a match for the little old men. It was no use taunting them with 'the infirmities of age,' or calling them dotards and fogies. They weren't infirm; they didn't dote; they hadn't a touch of fogeyism about them. But where does one find the active, jaunty, sarcastic little old man nowadays? Large, limp, purse-mouthed old men fill the bow-windows of clubs, wheezing forth platitudes to other old men. Sad old boys maunder in drawing-rooms or grumble at dinner-tables. Dreary old peers, six feet bent double, rise from the back benches of their Lordships' House, and deny the fact of the sun having risen that morning. It would be libellous, perhaps, to hint that—well, our vestries—are governed by knots of doddering old men; but it is undeniable, I think, that many really clever little old men were formerly to be found in the Commons' House of Parliament. Those that now remain are few, and are growing a feeble folk.

Little old men seemed to have acquired their vivacity, as old port wine its crust and flavour, by long keeping and careful cellarage. There is, as a rule, nothing more remarkable in a little young man than

his conceit. As for little middle-aged men, they frequently keep their diminutive size a secret altogether. It is astonishing how many middle-aged men are not more than four foot nothing, and the world, even to the wives of their bosoms, are not in the least aware of the fact. Louis le Grand masqueraded it through life on high-heeled shoes and in a towering periwig; and it was only when he died that the undertaker first, and Europe afterwards, discovered that he was a little man. Voltaire, again, was not half so tall as he gave himself out, and the world supposed him to be. It is better, perhaps, that these things should be kept secrets of state, even from ourselves. It is not good to find out too much about great men — about man altogether it may be. Are we anything the better for the information imparted to us, with a diabolic sneer, by Swift, that 'man is only a forked straddling animal with bandy legs'?

It is curious to contrast the images handed down to us of the illustrious dead who were of no great stature, with what might have been their semblance had they become old. Alexander the Great, for all Apelles' flattery, was a little man. Imagine the conqueror of Darius as both little and old! Or, more suggestive still, picture to yourself Napoleon the First, had he survived Sir Hudson Lowe—who, by the way, did live to be old, and of no great stature—as a little old man — brisk, alert, snuffy, and with a scratch wig! Not that little old kings and emperors have been, or are rarities. Sovereigns, as a rule, run

small. No doubt continual preoccupation in devising beneficial measures for their subjects dries them up. They are so good that they lose flesh. The weight of a crown contracts their joints. The odour of incense—like the gin given to the poor little children of acrobats—stops their growth. Turn over the *Almanach de Gotha*, and interleave it with cartes-de-visite, and you will find the majority of European sovereigns to be below the average size. That long Prince Oscar of Sweden was a phenomenon to rank in a museum by the side of the Emperor of Russia's colossal drum-major, and O'Brien the Irish giant. Besides, was not his Swedish highness's grandfather Bernadotte the grenadier?

The mention of continental potentates reminds me that France is to this day the country of little old men. Still at the Café de Foy, and other good old pigtail establishments, where smoking is not permitted, and the poisonous absinthe emits no vapid odour—still in Luxembourg and Tuileries gardens; in salons of the Faubourg St. Germain; in cabinets de lecture hard by the Odéon, do you meet the little old Frenchman, with his cheerful dried chimpanzee face, his thatch of white stubble, his snowy neckerchief, the red ribbon at his button-hole, and the never-failing snuff-box in his hand, ready to be offered to all acquaintances. In his youth he was a Merveilleux, a Muscadin, an Incroyable. He remembers the first Empire, the two Restorations, the Hundred Days. He was a page to the Reine Hortense, perhaps; an officer in Charles the

Tenth's Royal Guards probably. He ceased to trouble himself with politics after the 27th of July 1830. At the monarchies, republics, and empires which have succeeded that convulsion, he shrugs his little shoulders with philosophic indifference. 'C'est comme ça,' he says. He speaks of all the kings, dictators, marshals, ministers since 1830, as 'ces Messieurs!' Let us lift the hat to this little old Frenchman with his weazen countenance and thin legs, his agile courteous ways. He, too, is fading out. A little old Frenchman of the stock once gravely accounted to me for the undeniable ugliness and boorishness of the modern Parisian or 'Mossoo,' by asserting that he was the unconscious offspring of the Cossacks who formed part of the army of occupation in 1815. It is a wise child that knows his own father. Be it as it may, it is indubitable that the graceful and polite little old Frenchman—perfectly well known in English society forty years ago as the emigrant chevalier who taught dancing and the languages in ladies' boarding-schools, who was as gallant as Dunois, and as chivalrous as Bayard, and lived contentedly on twopence-halfpenny a day, is on the wane.

Your little old men abroad live, when they are to be found extant at all, to a prodigious age. They seem to be subject to the same mummifying influences as the bodies of the old monks in Sicily. They grow very yellow, very withered, their bones seem to crack as they walk, but they don't die. Take my friend Estremadura, for instance. I have known Señor Ramon

de Estremadura ever since I can remember the knowledge of anything. That Hidalgo knew my papa, and *he* has been dead nearly forty years. Estremadura was so old when I was a child, that the nurses used to frighten me with him. I have met him, off and on, in almost every capital in Europe. Only this summer, drinking tea with certain friends, there came a brisk though tremulous little double knock at the door. 'Ecoutez,' cried the lady of the house; 'that surely is Estremadura's knock.' Estremadura! There was a cry of derisive amazement. Everybody agreed that he had been dead ten years. Somebody had seen an account of his funeral in the newspapers. But the door opened, and Estremadura made his appearance. He was the same as ever. The same yellow face, black bead-like eyes, innumerable wrinkles, fixed grin: the same straw hat, grass-green coat, white trousers, and big stick—his unvarying costume ever since I had known him. 'How do you do?' was his salutation to me. 'Ver well since I saw you lasse?' I had not seen him for fifteen years. He chatted and talked, and drank tea. He was asked whence he had come? From Rome. Whither he was going? To Stockholm. He was charming; yet we could not help feeling, all of us, as though we were sitting in the presence of a facetious phantom, of a jocular ghost. It was rather a relief when he skipped away, and was seen no more. I wonder whether he will ever turn up again. It is clear that Estremadura is ninety, if he be a day old; yet I daresay he will read the account of *my* death, if anybody

takes the trouble to advertise that fact in the newspapers, and say, 'Aha! and so he die. Eh! I knew his good papa ver well.'

Surely we should be careful in keeping up the breed of little old men at home as well as abroad. To me they are infinitely more agreeable than big men, young or old. But they are dwindling away, they are vanishing fast. The little old ticket-porters, with their white aprons, are being superseded by burly middle-aged messengers, or else by bearded commissionnaires. Artists get into the Academy before they are forty; and the little old painter who remembers Northcote, and to whom the Princess Amelia sat for her portrait, is a rara avis. Among the City companies you sometimes light upon wardens and members of the court of assistants, who are little old men of the true stamp. But their numbers are waxing small, and it must be written of them, 'Here lie.'

I own there is one class of little old men whom I could well spare from the stage of existence. I mean the half-palsied, shrivelled, wobegone little gray atomies in blue smocks and corduroy shorts, and ribbed stockings on their shrunken shanks, whom the metropolitan boards of guardians send out to sweep the streets. They are always in imminent danger of being run over. They always sweep the refuse the wrong way. It is terrible to look at their poor old faces and bleary eyes, full of drowsy woe, blank misery, inane despair. 'No Hope, and there never has been any these seventy years;' these words seem legibly in-

scribed on the bands round their oilskin hats. These little old men are a fear and a wonder to me, and in decency and mercy I think they should not be allowed to drift about in the great river of London street life.

NOBODY ABROAD.

VERY early in this present century, that is to say, in the month of October 1801, it occurred to MR. NOBODY to visit the famous city of Paris. According to the Republican calendar, which then obtained among our neighbours, the month was not October, and the year was not 1801. The month was Brumaire, and the year was Ten of the Republic one and indivisible. But Mr. Nobody being an Englishman, the non-republican computation of time and season may be adopted. I call my traveller Mr. Nobody because I have not the slightest idea who he was, whence he came, or whither—when he returned from his Parisian tour—he went. He was certainly not Tom Paine, but I am not prepared to assert that he might not have been the author of Junius, taking a shady and secretive holiday, according to his inscrutable wont. He wrote a book about his travels, entitled *A Rough Sketch of Modern Paris*; and he caused it to be published anonymously, in a thin octavo, by a bookseller in St. Paul's-churchyard. He did not even favour the public with his initials, or with three asterisks, or with a Greek or Roman pseudonym. At the end of four pages of preface

he signs himself 'The Author,' which, in default of any other explanation, is, to say the least, baffling. To increase the bewilderment of posterity, the work of this occult traveller takes the form of a series of letters, addressed to a friend, who is qualified as 'My Dear Sir;' but who 'My Dear Sir' was is unknown to Everybody—except Nobody. At the conclusion of each of his letters Mr. Nobody observes, 'As soon as I have anything to communicate, I shall write again. In the mean time I take my leave, and am, &c.' What are you to do with an author who persists in saying that he is et cetera?

Mr. Nobody, however, is not to be neglected, for two reasons: the first, that he has drawn a very curious and interesting picture of Paris, as it appeared to an Englishman during the brief peace, or rather truce, of Amiens; the second that, his obstinate anonymity notwithstanding, Mr. Nobody's pages are fruitful of internal evidence that he must have been Somebody, and somebody of note, too. He had a wife who shared his pleasures and his hardships. He was on visiting terms with his Britannic Majesty's ambassador in Paris, and was presented at the Tuileries. Mrs. Nobody even dined there. Finally, he took his own carriage abroad with him, and his letters of credit on his bankers were illimitable.

On the twenty-sixth of October he left the York House at Dover, and embarked on board a neutral vessel, which he was compelled to hire, no English packet-boat being yet permitted to enter a French

port. After a smooth and pleasant passage of four hours, Mr. Nobody found himself at Calais. As soon as the vessel entered the port, two Custom-house officers in military uniform came on board, and took down the names of the passengers. One of them retired, to make his report to the municipality of Calais, while the other remained on board to prevent any of the passengers from landing. While the French douanier was on shore, Calais pier was crowded by spectators, the greater part of whom were military men. They seemed to derive great gratification from staring at the English ladies, and from examining the body of Mr. Nobody's carriage, which was hung on the deck of the ship; while Mr. N. himself was equally entertained with the great *moustaches*—the italics are his own—of the grenadiers, the wooden shoes of the peasants, and the close caps of the grisettes.

The douanier returning on board, Mr. Nobody and suite were permitted to touch the territory of the republic, and, escorted by a guard of bourgeois, desperately ragged as to uniform, were marched from the quay to the Custom-house, from the Custom-house to the mayor, and from the mayor to the Commissary of Police. At each of these offices, examinations—oral, impedimental, and personal—were made. Mr. Nobody was fain not only to surrender his passport, but also his pocket-book and letters. The last-named were returned on the following day. These little police amenities coming to an end about seven P.M.,

Mr. Nobody was then free to sit down to an excellent dinner at the celebrated hotel formerly kept by Dessein, now succeeded by his nephew Quillacq—a very respectable man, who met Mr. N. at landing, and, with the utmost civility and attention, took care of his carriage and baggage. The Unknown wished to set out on the following morning for Paris, but, according to respectable M. Quillacq, that was a simple impossibility; for, although the Unmentioned had brought with him a passport in due form from M. de Talleyrand, countersigned by M. Otto, the French minister in London, and backed by his Britannic Majesty's own gracious license to travel in foreign parts, it was necessary to have all these documents exchanged for a laissez-passer from the mayor of Paris.

Mr. N. accordingly passed the whole of the next day in Calais, and on Wednesday morning, accompanied by 'Mrs. ——,' he left Calais, with post-horses. Why won't he call her his Araminta, or his Sophonisba? Betsy Jane, even, would be preferable to this colourless 'Mrs. ——.' The roads were very bad, particularly near Boulogne; the posting charges were moderate—six livres, or five shillings, a stage of five miles; say a shilling a mile. How much is first-class fare by the Great Northern of France? About twopence-halfpenny.

Montreuil, where the travellers were to sleep, was not reached until sunset. Here was found excellent accommodation 'at the inn celebrated by Sterne.'

The Reverend Mr. Yorick seems to have been the Murray of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the present one, and it is astonishing that his publishers did not put forth an advertising edition of the *Sentimental Journey*. At Montreuil, Mr. N. (the rogue!), in true Yorick-like spirit, noticed 'the smiling attention of two very pretty girls who acted as waiters.' He omits to state whether Mrs. —— noticed their smiling attention. The next day, through a fine country and bad roads, Amiens was reached. The cultivation by the wayside was good; the peasants were well clad; the beggars were numerous. The waiters, postboys, and landlords were everywhere remarkably civil, and expressed their joy at seeing 'Milords Anglais' once more among them. Can Mr. Nobody have been a Nobleman, and Mrs. —— only a shallow delusion veiling an actual Ladyship? His Lordship—I mean his Nonentity—remarked that the lower classes were more respectful than before the revolution. The reason appeared to him obvious. 'The old nobility treated their inferiors with jocular familiarity—the familiarity which, it may be, bordered on contempt—and the inferiors, mere thralls and bondsmen as they were, took trifling verbal liberties with their lords. Did not something akin to this prevail in Scotland during the last century, and is it not very well illustrated in Dean Ramsay's story of the Scotch lord who picks up a farthing in the sight of a beggar? 'Earl!' cries out the gaberlunzie man, 'gie us the siller.' 'Na, na,'

replies his lordship, pocketing the coin, 'fin' a baubee for yoursel', puir bodie.' When the social gulf between classes is unfathomable, do we not sometimes affect to shake hands across it? But when we stand foot to foot—'mensch zu mensch,' as Schiller has it —on the same earth, do we not often feel inclined to shake our fists in each other's faces? 'The loss of their rank,' observes Mr. Nobody, 'has compelled the higher classes to command respect by a distance of manner, which has, of course, produced a similar course of conduct in the persons beneath them.' But for that merciless date — 1801 — one would think that Mr. Nobody had travelled in the State of Virginia since the abolition of slavery. The planters are no longer hail fellow well met with their serfs, and enfranchised Sambo no longer addresses the white man as 'Mas'r,' but as 'Sa.' Liberty is a wonderful teacher of etiquette.

At Amiens the Unknown drove to the Hôtel d'Angleterre, where he was magnificently and miserably lodged. The windows and doors declined to keep out the wind and rain; the fires were bad, and the supper was worse; nor was the final touch of extravagant charges wanting. The journey was resumed on Friday morning; the beauty of the country and the badness of the roads increasing at every step. At length the weary travellers clattered into Chantilly, found a comfortable bed, and, on Saturday morning, visited the 'magnificent ruins' of the Palace of Chantilly. The superb edifice of the stables only

remained intact. The government of the First Consul had forbidden the sale of these buildings, and the mistress of the inn told Mr. Nobody, with tears in her eyes, that had Napoleon been at the head of affairs only six months sooner, the palace also would have been rescued from destruction.

A little way out of Chantilly, a fine paved road commenced, extending to Paris, which city Mr. Nobody reached at two P.M. on Saturday. He had been three and a half days and three nights on the road. At the Paris barrier, passports were asked for, but were at once and civilly returned. 'Carriages,' Mr. N. adds, 'are no longer stopped, as formerly, in every town, to be searched for contraband goods; but turnpikes are numerous and expensive.' On entering Paris, the travellers drove to several hotels before they could procure accommodation, and such as they at last found was wretched. Many of the hotels had been stripped during the revolution, and had not been refurnished; and the few remaining in proper gear were crowded by foreigners, who, since the peace, had flocked hither in vast numbers from every country in the world. Mr. Nobody very strongly advises persons intending to visit Paris to write some days beforehand to their correspondents, if they desire to be comfortably lodged on their arrival. The Mysterious Man was not, however, disheartened by the badness of the inn. So soon as he had changed his attire, he hastened to call on M. Perregaux, his banker, who, notwithstanding his recent promotion

to the rank of senator, was as civil and obliging as ever. Mr. Nobody *must* have been Somebody. See how civil everybody was to him!

I have been an unconscionable time bringing this shadowy friend of mine from Calais to Paris; but I hold this record of his experiences to be somewhat of the nature of a Text, on which a lay sermon might be preached to the great edification of modern, fretful, and grumbling travellers. 'Young sir,' I would say, were it my business to preach, the which, happily, it is not, 'modern young British tourist, take account of the four days' sufferings of Mr. Nobody and Mrs. Dash, and learn patience and contentment. Some eighty hours did they pass in hideous discomfort, on dolorous roads, or in unseemly hostelries. Much were they baited anent passports: much were they exercised in consequence of the stiff-neckedness of that proud man the mayor of Calais. How many times, for aught we know, may not their linchpins have disappeared, their traces snapped, their axles parted? Who shall say but that their postillions, although civil, smelt fearfully of garlic, and (especially during the stages between Beauvais and St. Denis) became partially overcome by brandy? St. Denis has always been notorious for the worst brandy in Europe. And the dust! And the beggars! But for the "smiling attentions" of those two pretty waiter girls at Montreuil, I tremble to think upon what might have been the temper of Mr. Nobody when he found himself, at last, in Paris. Thus he of 1801. This

is how your grandpapa, your uncle William, went to Paris; but how fares it with you, my young friend? You designed, say on Friday afternoon last, to take three days' holiday. You would have a "run over to Paris," you said. You dined at six P.M. on Friday at the Junior Juvenal Club, Pall-mall. You smoked your habitual cigar; you played your usual game of billiards after dinner. It was many minutes after eight when you found yourself, with a single dressing-bag, for luggage, at Charing-cross Terminus. You took a "first-class return" for Paris; for which you paid, probably, much less than Mr. Nobody disbursed for the passage of himself and his high-hung carriage (to say nothing of Mrs. Dash) from Dover to Calais. A couple of hours of the express train's fury brought you, that Friday night, to Dover—brought you to the Admiralty pier, to the very verge and brink of the much-sounding sea, and bundling you, so to speak, down some slippery steps, sent you staggering on board a taut little steamer, which, having gorged certain mail-bags, proceeded to fight her way through the biggest waves. In two hours afterwards you were at Calais. No passports, no botheration with municipalities, commissaires, or stiff-necked mayors awaited you. Another express train waited for you, giving you time to dispatch a comfortable supper; and by seven o'clock on Saturday morning you were in Paris. You went to the Porte St. Martin on Saturday night, and to Mabille afterwards. On Sunday I hope you went to church, and perhaps you went to Versailles.

On Monday you had a good deal of boulevard shopping to get through, for your sisters, or for the Mrs. Dash of the future; and, after a comfortable five o'clock dinner at the Café Riche in the afternoon, you found yourself shortly after seven P.M. at the Chemin de Fer du Nord, and, by six o'clock on Tuesday morning, you were back again at Charing-cross or at Victoria. Arrived there, you had yet a florin and a fifty centime piece left of the change for a ten-pound note. And yet you murmur and grumble. You have spoken heresy against the harbour-master of Dover. You have hurled bitter words at the directors of the South-Eastern Railway Company, and have made mock of the London, Chatham, and Dover. Thrice have you threatened to write to the *Times*. Once did you propose to "punch" the head of an obnoxious waiter at the Calais buffet.' To this purport I could say a great deal if I preached sermons.

My esteemed friend Mr. Nobody abode in Paris for full six months; but the amount of sight-seeing he went through was so vast, and his account thereof is so minute, that, for reasons of space, I do not dare to follow him from each Parisian pillar to its corresponding post. I can only briefly note that he attended a sitting of the legislative body in the ci-devant Palais Bourbon, and that he paid five francs for admission to the gallery. Drums and fifes announced the approach of the legislators, and a guard of honour, consisting of an entire regiment, escorted them. The president having taken the chair, more drums

and fifes proclaimed the arrival of three counsellors of state, bearing a message from the government. These high republican functionaries were preceded by ushers wearing Spanish hats with tricoloured plumes; the counsellors themselves were dressed in scarlet cloth, richly embroidered. They ascended the tribune, read their message, and made three separate speeches on the subject of honour, glory, and France; whereafter the legislative body, with loud cries of 'Vive le Premier Consul!' 'Vive Madame Bonaparte!' separated. It was the last day of the session. Abating the scarlet coats and the Spanish hats of the huissiers, the break up of a parliamentary session in 1801 must have very closely resembled that which we see in the French Corps Législatif, in 1869. Mr. Nobody went away much pleased, especially with the admiration bestowed by his neighbours in the gallery on Lord Cornwallis, who was present among the corps diplomatique, and for whom Mr. Nobody seems himself to have entertained an affection bordering on adoration. 'Yes, yes,' cried an enthusiastic republican near him, 'that tall man is Milord Cornwallis. He has a fine figure. He looks like a military man. He has served in the army. Is it not true, sir? Look at that little man near him. What a difference! What a mean appearance!'

Mr. Nobody was in one aspect an exceptional Englishman. He appears to have been imbued with a sincere admiration for the talents of Napoleon Bonaparte, and even to have had some liking for the

personal character of that individual. 'My dear sir,' he writes to that Nameless friend of his on the sixth of December, 'my curiosity is at length gratified. I have seen Bonaparte. You will readily conceive how much pleasure I felt to-day in beholding, for the first time, this extraordinary man, on whose exertions the fate of France, and in many respects that of Europe, may be said to depend.' Mr. N. was fortunate enough to obtain places in the apartments of Duroc, governor of the Tuileries, from which he witnessed a review in the Carrousel. The Consular, soon to become the Imperial, Guard were inspected by the Master of France, then in the thirty-third year of his age. He was mounted on a white charger. As he passed several times before Mr. Nobody's window, that Impalpability had ample leisure to observe him; and it appears to me that the portrait he has drawn of the First Consul, then in the full flush of his fame, undarkened by D'Enghien's murder, Pichegru's imputed end, and Josephine's divorce, is sufficient to rescue Mr. Nobody's notes from oblivion. 'His complexion,' writes the Unknown, 'is remarkably sallow: his countenance expressive, but stern; his figure lithe, but well made; and his whole person, like the mind which it contains, singular and remarkable. If I were compelled to compare him to any one, I should name Kemble the actor. Though Bonaparte is less in size, and less handsome than that respectable performer, yet, in the construction of the features and the general expression, there is a strong

resemblance. The picture of Bonaparte at the review, exhibited some time back in Piccadilly,* and the bust in Sèvres china, which is very common in Paris, and has probably become equally so in London' (it was soon to be superseded by Gillray's monstrous caricatures of the Corsican Ogre), 'are the best likenesses I have seen. As to his dress, he wore the grand costume of his office, that is to say, a scarlet velvet coat, profusely embroidered with gold. To this he had added leather breeches, jockey boots, and a little plain cocked-hat, the only ornament to which was a national cockade. His hair, unpowdered, was cut close to his neck.' Now this (excuse the anachronism) is a perfect photograph, and might serve as a guide to any English artist desirous of emulating, as a Napoleographer, the achievements of Meissonnier or Gerome. We have had, from English painters, Napoleon in blue, in green, in a gray greatcoat, in his purple coronation robes, even in the striped nankeen suit of his exile on the Rock. But the great enemy of England in scarlet! the vanquished of Waterloo in a red coat! But for Mr. Nobody's testimony I should just as soon have imagined George the Third with a Phrygian cap over his wig, or the Right Honourable William Pitt weathering the storm as a sans culotte.

* This picture was by Carle Vernet, the father of Horace, and was exhibited at Fores's—ancestor of the present well-known print-seller. At Fores's, just eight years previously, had been on view an engraving of the execution of Louis the Sixteenth, by Isaac Cruikshank (father of our George), and a 'working model' of the guillotine.

Again did Mr. Nobody see the Corsican, and at his own house—in the audience hall of the Tuileries. Mr. Jackson was minister plenipotentiary from England prior to Lord Whitworth's coming; and to Mr. Jackson did Mr. Nobody apply to obtain presentation at the court of the First Consul. His name —*what* was his name?—being accordingly sent in to Citizen Talleyrand, three years afterwards to be Prince of Beneventum, minister of foreign affairs, Mr. N. drove to the Tuileries at three o'clock in the afternoon, and was ushered into a small apartment on the ground-floor, called the Saloon of the Ambassadors, where the foreign ministers and their respective countrymen waited until Napoleon was ready to receive them. Chocolate, sherbert, and liqueurs in abundance having been handed around—a hint for St. James's Palace—the doors, after an hour's interval, were thrown open, and the guests ascended the grand staircase, which was lined by grenadiers with their arms grounded. Passing through four or five rooms, in each of which was an officer's guard, who saluted the strangers, the cortége came into the presence chamber. Here stood Bonaparte, between Cambacérès, the second, and Lebrun, the third consul. The triumvirs were all in full fig of scarlet velvet and gold. The generals, senators, and counsellors of state who surrounded Napoleon made way for the foreigners, and a circle was immediately formed, the nationalities ranging themselves behind their proper ministers. The Austrian ambassador stood on the

right of the First Consul; next to him Mr. Jackson; then Count Lucchesini, the Prussian minister; and next to him the Hereditary Prince of Orange, who was to be presented that day, and who was not to meet Napoleon again until Waterloo. In compliment to the Dutch prince, Napoleon, contrary to his practice, began the audience on his side the circle. He spoke some time to the son of the deposed Stadtholder, and seemed anxious to make his awkward and extraordinary situation as little painful to him as possible. According to Mr. Nobody, the Napoleonic blandishments were lost on his Batavian highness, who was sulky and silent. In passing each foreign minister, the First Consul received the individuals of each respective nation with the greatest ease and dignity. Where had he learnt all this ease and dignity, this young soldier of thirty-two? From the goatherds of Corsica? From the snuffy old priests who were his tutors at Brienne? From the bombardiers at Toulon? In the camps of Italy? From the Sphinx in Egypt? From Talma the actor, who, when the conqueror was poor, had often given him the dinner he lacked? When it came to Mr. Jackson's turn, sixteen English were presented. After he had spoken to five or six of their number, Napoleon remarked, 'with a smile which is peculiarly his own, and which changes a countenance usually stern into one of great mildness: "I am delighted to see here so many English. I hope our union may be of long continuance. We are the two most powerful and most civilised

nations in Europe. We should unite to cultivate the arts, and sciences, and letters; in short, to improve the happiness of human nature."' In about two years after this interview, Englishmen and Frenchmen were cultivating the arts and sciences, and doing their best to improve the happiness of human nature, by cutting each other's throats in very considerable numbers. Did Napoleon really mean what he said? Was he really anxious to be our friend, if we would only let him? Or was he then, and all times, a Prodigious Humbug?

Mrs. Dash was to have her share in the hospitalities of the Tuileries. Returning home from viewing the sights one afternoon at half-past four o'clock, Mr. N. found a messenger who was the bearer of an invitation to Mrs. Dash, asking her to dinner that very day at five. The lady dressed in haste, and drove to the palace. She returned enraptured. The entertainment was elegant; the sight superb. More than two hundred persons sat down to dinner in a splendid apartment. The company consisted, besides Napoleon's family, of the ministers, the ambassadors, several generals, senators, and other constituted authorities. There were only fifteen ladies present. All the English ladies who had been presented to Madame Bonaparte were asked; but only two of their number remained in Paris. The dinner was served entirely on gold and silver plate, and Sèvres china: the latter bearing the letter B on every dish; the central plateau was covered with moss, out of

which arose innumerable natural flowers, the odour of which perfumed the whole room. The First Consul and Madame Bonaparte conversed very affably with those around them. The servants were numerous, splendidly dressed, and highly attentive, and the dinner lasted more than two hours. Seven years ago, the lord of this sumptuous feast had been glad to pick up the crumbs from an actor's table, and vegetated in a garret in Paris, had haunted the antechambers of the War Minister in vain, had revolved plans of offering his sword to the Grand Turk if he could only procure a new pair of boots wherein to make his voyage to Constantinople. O the ups and downs of fortune! The First Consul was fated to invite few more Englishmen to dinner. But he was doomed to dine with us, not as a host, but as an unwilling guest. I can picture him in the cabin of the Northumberland, rising wearily from heavy joints to avoid heavier drinking, and the admiral and his officers scowling at him because he wouldn't stop and take t'other bottle. 'The General,' pointedly remarked Sir George Cockburn, once when his captive rose from table, and fled from port and sherry, 'has evidently not studied politeness in the school of Lord Chesterfield.' The poor temperate Italian, to whose pale cheek a single glass of champagne would bring a flush! Yet Mr. Nobody thought him dignity and politeness itself; and my private opinion is that Mr. Nobody knew what was what.

SHOCKING!

THE other day, being at Seville, at the inn dinner of the Fonda de Paris, I saw an English lady thrown into great perturbation by the conduct of a Frenchman, her neighbour, who having finished his plate of soup, and the puchero being somewhat tardy in making its appearance, drew forth a leathern case and a box of wax matches, and, having bitten the end off a very big and bad cigar, proceeded to light and smoke it. I do not think a Spaniard of any class, to the lowest, would have done this thing. Although smoking is common enough at Spanish dinner-tables, when only men or natives are present, the innate good breeding of a cabalero would at once cause him to respect the presence of a lady and a stranger; and he would as soon think of kindling, unbidden, a weed before her, as of omitting to cast himself (metaphorically) at her feet when he took his leave. Moreover, the Frenchman was wrong even in his manner of smoking. To consume a cigar at meal-times is not even un costumbre del pais—a custom of the country. It is, the rather, a stupid solecism. Between soup and puchero, or fish and roast, you may just venture on a cigarito—a dainty roll of tobacco and tissue paper. Any other form of fumiga-

tion, ere the repast be over, is ill mannered. The Gaul, however, thought, no doubt, that to puff at one of the hideous lettuce-leaf sausages of the Regio Impériale at dinner-time was precisely *the* thing to do in Spain. He smoked at Seville, just as on a hot day, in an English coffee-room, he would have ordered turtle-soup, a beefsteak 'well bleeding,' and a pot of porter-beer. I only wonder that he did not come down to dinner at the Fonda de Paris in full bull-fighter's costume—green satin breeches, pink silk stockings, and his hair in a net, or strumming a guitar, or clacking a pair of castanets. Indeed, he grinned complacently as he pulled at the abominable brand, and looked round the table, as though for approval. The Spaniards preserved a very grave aspect; and Don Sandero M'Gillicuddy, late of Buenos Ayres, my neighbour, whispered to me that he thought the Frenchman 'vara rude.' As for the English lady, she was furious. She gathered up her skirts, grated away her chair, turned her left scapula full on the offending Frenchman, and I have no doubt wrote by the next post to Mr. John Murray of Albemarle-street, indignantly to ask why English readers of the *Handbook* were not warned against the prevalence of this atrocious practice at Spanish dinner-tables. In fact, she did everything but quit the hospitable board. In remaining, she showed wisdom; for Spain is not a country where you can afford to trifle with your meals. You had best gather your rose-buds while you may, and help yourself to the puchero

whenever you have a chance. Ages may pass ere you get anything to eat again.

The Frenchman was not abashed by this palpable expression of distaste on the part of his fair neighbour. I had an over-the-way acquaintance with him, and, glancing in my direction, he simply gave a deprecatory shrug, and murmured, 'Ah! c'est comme ça.' SHOCKING! It never entered the honest fellow's head that he had been wanting in courtesy to the entire company, but he jumped at the conclusion that the demoiselle Anglaise was a faultless monster of prudery, and that the inhalation of tobacco-smoke at dinner-time, the employment of a fork as a toothpick, the exhibition of ten thousand photographed 'legs of the ballet' in the shop windows, and frequent reference to the anonymous or Bois de Boulogne world in conversation, were, to her and her sex and nation generally, things abhorrent, criminal, and 'shocking.'

The French, who never get hold of an apt notion or a true expression without wearing it threadbare and worrying it to death, and have even traditional jests against this country, which are transmitted from caricaturist to caricaturist, and from father to son, have built up the 'faultless monster' to which I alluded above, and persist in believing that it is the ordinary type of the travelling Englishwoman. Oddly enough, while their ladies—and all other continental ladies—have borrowed from ours the quaint and becoming hat, the coloured petticoats and stockings, and the high-heeled boots which of late years have

made feminine juvenility so coquettish and so fascinating, no French draughtsman, no French word-painter, ever depicts the English young lady save as a tall, rigid, and angular female—comely of face if you will, but standing bolt upright as a lifeguardsman, with her arms pendent, and her eyes demurely cast down. She always wears a straw bonnet of the coal-scuttle form, or an enormous flap hat with a green veil. Her hands, incased in beaver gloves, and her feet, which are in sandalled shoes, are very large. She usually carries a capacious reticule in variegated straw, of a bold chessboard pattern. She seldom wears any crinoline, and her hair is arranged in long ringlets most deliciously drooping. She seldom opens her mouth but to ejaculate 'Shocking!' It is absolutely astounding to find so accurate an observer and so graphic a narrator as Monsieur Théophile Gautier falling into this dull and false conventionalism in his charming book on Spain. He is describing Gibraltar, and is very particular in the portrayal of such a Mees Anglaise as I have sketched above. The fidelity of the portrait will of course be fully appreciated by all British officers who have mounted guard over the Pillars of Hercules. The ladies of the garrison at Gibraltar are not, it is true, so numerous as they might be. Calpe is not a popular station with military females. There is no native society beyond the families of the 'Rock scorpions,' who are usually dealers in mixed pickles and Allsopp's pale ale, and a few Spaniards who earn a remunerative but immoral

livelihood by coining bad dollars and smuggling Manchester cottons and Bremen cigars through San Roque; and unfortunately, to ladies of a theological turn, one of the chief charms of a sojourn in a foreign garrison is here lacking. There is nobody to convert in Gibraltar but the Jews; and as it takes about a thousand pounds sterling to turn a Hebrew into a Christian—and a very indifferent Christian at that, for you have to set him up in business and provide for his relations to the third and fourth generation—missionary enterprise, to say the least, languishes. With all these drawbacks, I am told that English female society at the Rock is charming; that their costume, their features, and their manners are alike sprightly and vivacious, and that the 'girls of Gib,' as regards that rapidity and entrain which are so pleasingly characteristic of modern life, are only second to the far-famed merry maidens of Montreal, whose scarlet knickerbockers and twinkling feet, disporting on the glassy surface of the Victoria 'Rink,' have led captive so many old British grenadiers. When a maiden of Montreal is unusually rapid—what is termed 'fast' in this country—they say she is 'two forty on a plank road,' two minutes and forty seconds being the time in which a Canadian trotter will be backed to get over a mile of deal-boarded track.

Now, whatever could Monsieur Gautier have been thinking of so to libel the ladies of Gibraltar? They slow! They angular! They 'avec la dimarche d'un grenadier'! They addicted to the national ejaculation

of 'Shocking!' That old oak, however, of prejudice is so very firmly rooted, that generations, perhaps, will pass away ere foreigners begin to perceive that the stiff, reserved, puritanical Englishman or Englishwoman, if they still indeed exist, and travel on the Continent, have for sons and daughters ingenious youths, who in volatile vivacity are not disposed to yield the palm to young France, and gaily-attired maidens, frolicsome, not to say frisky, in their demeanour. It is curious that the French, ordinarily so keen of perception and so shrewd in social dissection, should not, by this time, have discovered some other and really existent types of English tourists, male and female, to supply the place of the obsolete and well-nigh mythical 'Mees,' with her long ringlets, her green veil, her large hands and feet, and her figure full of awkward and ungainly angles. And may not the British Baronet, with his top-boots, and his bulldog, and his hoarse cries for his servant 'Jhon,' and his perpetual thirst for 'grogs,' be reckoned among the extinct animals? I was reading only yesterday, in the Chronique of one of the minor Parisian journals, a couple of anecdotes most eloquent of the false medium through which we are still viewed by the lively Gaul. In the first, the scene is laid at the Grand Hôtel. An Englishman is reading the *Times* and smoking a cigar. It is a step in advance, perhaps, that the Briton should have come to a cabana instead of pulling at a prodigiously long pipe. The Englishman happens to drop some hot ashes on the

skirt of his coat. 'Monsieur, monsieur!' cries a Frenchman sitting by, 'take care, you are on fire!' 'Well, sir,' replies the Briton, indignant at being addressed by a person to whom he has not been formally introduced, 'what is that to you? You have been on fire twenty minutes, and I never mentioned the fact.' I refrain from giving the wonderful Anglo-French jargon in which the Englishman's reply is framed. The second anecdote is equally choice. An English nobleman is 'enjoying his villeggiatura at Naples'—by which, I suppose, is meant that he is betting on the chances of a proximate eruption of Mount Vesuvius—when his faithful steward, Williams Johnson, arrives in hot haste from England. 'Well, Williams,' asks the nobleman, 'what is the matter?' 'If you please, milor, your carriage-horses have dropped down dead.' 'Of what did they die?' 'Of fatigue. They had to carry so much water to help put out the fire.' 'What fire?' 'That of your lordship's country-house, which was burnt down on the day of the funeral.' 'Whose funeral?' 'That of your lordship's mother, who died of grief on hearing that the lawsuit on which your lordship's fortune depended had been decided against you.' Charming anecdotes are these, are they not? The gentleman who popped them into his column of chit-chat, gave them as being of perfect authenticity and quite recent occurrence, and signed his name at the bottom; and yet I think I have read two stories very closely resembling them in the admired collection of Monsieur Joseph Miller.

The Englishman who is the hero of cock-and-bull stories, and the English lady who is always veiling her face with her fan, and exclaiming, 'Shocking!' are so dear to the French and the general continental heart, that we must look for at least another half century of railways, telegraphs, illustrated newspapers, and international colleges, before the mythical period passes away and the reign of substantial realism begins. I remember at the sumptuous Opera House at Genoa seeing a ballet called the *Grateful Baboon*, in which there was an English general who wore a swallow-tail coat with lapels, Hessian boots with tassels, a pigtail, colossal bell-pull epaulettes, and a shirt-frill like unto that of Mr. Boatswain Chucks. The audience accepted him quite as a matter of course, as the ordinary and recognised type of an English military officer of high rank; and then I remembered that during our great war with France, Genoa had been once occupied by an English force under Lord William Bentinck, and that his lordship had probably passed bodily into the album of costumes of the Teatro Carlo Felice, and remained there unchangeable for fifty years. In like manner the Americans, irritated, many years since, by the strictures of Mrs. Trollope, and stung to the quick by her sneers at the national peculiarities of 'calculating' and spitting, thought they could throw the taunt back in our teeth by assuming that we were a nation of cockneys, hopelessly given to misplacing our Hs. I had no sooner put down the lively Chronique containing

the Joe Millerisms than I took up a copy of the *New York Times*, a paper of very high character and respectability, and whose editor, Mr. Henry Raymond, one of the most distinguished of living American politicians, is doing good service to the republic by striving—almost alone, unhappily—to stem the tide of the intolerance and tyranny of the dominant faction. In a leading article of the *New York Times* I read, that when the British Lion was reproached with his blockade-running sins, and other violations of neutrality during the war, the hypocritical beast turned up his 'cotton-coloured eyes' and whimpered, 'Thou cannot say Hi did it.' The gentleman who wrote the leader doubtless thought he had hit us hard with that 'Hi.' He would have shot nearer the bull's-eye had he asked why Lord Russell is always 'obleged' instead of obliged, and why the noble proprietor of Knowsley is Lord 'Derby' to one set of politicians and Lord 'Darby' to another. But these little niceties of criticism seem to escape our neighbours. The imputation of cockneyism is a bit of mud that will stick. The Americans have made up their minds that we are 'halways waunting the walour of hour harms,' and 'hexulting hover hour appiness hunder the ouse of anover.' No disclaimers on our part will cause them to abandon their position. Nor in this case, nor in that of 'Shocking,' do we lie open, I venture to think, to accusations of a tu quoque nature. We caricature our neighbours more closely and observantly than they do us. We have found out long since that

the Yankee is not invariably a sallow man in a broad-brimmed straw hat, and a suit of striped nankeen, who sits all day in a rocking-chair with his feet on the mantelpiece, sucking mint julep through a straw. We know the circumstances under which he *will* put his feet up, and the seasons most favourable to the consumption of juleps. We have even ceased to draw him as he really was frequently visible, some twenty years since, as a cadaverous straight-haired individual, clean shaved, in a black tail-coat and pantaloons, a black satin waistcoat, and a fluffy hat stuck on the back of his head, and the integument of his left cheek much distended by a plug of tobacco.

The English painter of manners takes the modern American as he finds him: a tremendous dandy, rather 'loud' in make-up, fiercely moustached and bearded, ringed and chained to the eyes, and, on the continent of Europe at least, quoting Rafaelles and Titians, Canovas and Thorwaldsens, as confidently as he would discourse of quartz or petroleum in Wall-street. We know that he has long since ceased to 'calculate' or 'reckon,' and that it is much, now, if he 'guesses' or 'expects.' Not long ago, at Venice, an old English traveller was telling me of an American family with whom he had travelled from Florence to Bologna. One of the young ladies of the party, it seems, did not approve of the railway accommodation, and addressed the Italian guard in this wise: 'My Christian friend, is this a first-class kyar, or a cattle-wagon?' At a subsequent stage of the journey the

eldest gentleman of the group had remarked: 'Say, if any of you gals bought frames at Florence, I can supply you with a lot o' picturs I got at Rome, cheap.' 'They were model Yankees,' the old English traveller chuckled, as he told me the story. 'Not at all,' I made bold to answer; 'they were very exceptional Yankees indeed. They were, probably, shoddy people of the lowest class, rapidly enriched, and who had rushed off to Europe to air their new jewelry and their vulgarity.' Nine-tenths of the Americans one meets travelling abroad nowadays are well-informed and intelligent persons, often more fully appreciative of the beauties of art than middle-class English tourists. The American's ambition extends to everything, in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth. If he doesn't appreciate Italian pictures, his wife and daughters will, so that at least there shall be a decent amount of connoisseurship in the family; whereas to the middle-class English foreign picture galleries are usually an intolerable bore; and Paterfamilias very probably labours, besides, under a vague and secretly uneasy feeling that it does not become a man with less than twenty thousand a year and a handle to his name to talk of Rafaelles and Titians. There may be vulgar pretenders among the Americans whom one meets roving through the churches and galleries of the Continent—among what nation are vulgarity and pretence not to be found?—but take them for all in all, the love and appreciation for high art, although its very elements are of yester-

day's introduction, are more generally discriminated in the United States than in England. The amazing development of photography, and the consequent circulation of the noblest examples of art at very cheap rates, together with the American mania for travelling, are the leading causes of their precocious proficiency in studies in which our middle classes are, as yet, but timid and bungling beginners.

It is true that they have not yet learnt to discriminate between Englishmen whose speech is that of educated gentlemen, and those who put their Hs in the wrong place. Perhaps their ears are at fault. There are none so deaf as those who will not hear. But I adhere to my position, that we are able to jot down their little changes of manners more accurately than they are able to do ours. We do not wear our jokes against them threadbare, or worry their foibles to death after the French fashion. Pennsylvania repudiation was a good jest in its day, made all the more bitter by being almost wholly destitute of foundation in truth; but no one could help laughing at Sydney Smith's denunciations of the 'men in drab,' and his comically vindictive wish to cut up a Quaker, and apportion him, buttonless coat, broad-brimmed hat and all, among the defrauded bondholders. When it was discovered that Pennsylvania paid her obligations, the jokes about pails of whitewash grew stale, and we abandoned them for good. So it was with the great sea-serpent. For years the English newspapers used to have their weekly quota of examples of American

exaggeration and longbowism. We used to read about the cow which, being left out on a frosty night, never afterwards gave anything but ice-creams; about the man who was so tall that he had to climb up a ladder to take his hat off; about the discontented clock down east, which struck work instead of the hours. These jokes, too, have now become stale, and barely suffice to gain a giggle from the sixpenny seats when emitted by the comic singer at a music-hall. Sarcasms anent American brag and bunkum have not quite died out from English conversation and English journalism; for, unfortunately, the newest file of American papers are full of evidence that bunkum and brag are, on the other side of the Atlantic, as current as ever.

How is it that, when foreigners wish to quiz us, however good humouredly, they always date their witticisms from the morrow of the battle of Waterloo? The English began to be habitual travellers in the autumn of 1815. To us who know, or fancy that we know ourselves, the changes which have taken place in our manners and customs since that period are marvellous; but to foreigners we seem to be precisely the same people who came rushing to Paris when the allies were in the Palais Royal, and have since overrun every nook and corner of Europe. We know what we were like in '15; we had been bereft for twelve years of the French fashions. It was only once in some months or so that a Paris bonnet, or the design for a Paris dress, was furtively conveyed to us from Nantes or Hamburg in a smuggling lugger. Of

the French language and of French literature we were almost entirely ignorant. To be a fluent French scholar was to be put down either as a diplomatist or a spy; and not all diplomatists could speak French. We had not learned to waltz; and foreigners invited to the houses of English residents in Paris used to turn up their eyes at our barbarous country dances and hoidenish Sir Roger de Coverley. We knew no soup but turtle and pea; no made dishes but Irish stew and liver-and-bacon; no wines but port and sherry; claret gave us the cholic; champagne was only found at the tables of princes. We used to drink hot brandy-and-water in the morning. We used to get drunk after dinner. We had no soda-water. We had no cigars, and smoking a pipe was an amusement in winter few persons besides ship captains, hackney-coachmen, and the Reverend Dr. Parr, indulged. Our girls were bread-and-butter romps; our boys were coarse and often profligate hobbledehoys, whose idea of 'life' was to drink punch at the Finish, and beat the watch. Our fathers and mothers were staid and prim, and somewhat sulky, and carried with them everywhere a bigoted hatred of popery, and a withering contempt of foreigners. This is what we were like in 1815; and, in '15, I can easily understand that the angular young woman in the coal-scuttle bonnet and the green veil, who was always crying 'Shocking!' was as possible a personage as the baronet in top-boots who continually swore at 'Jhon,' his jockey, and roared for fresh grogs.

But can it be that we have not changed since the morrow of Waterloo? If we are to believe our critics, we are the self-same folk. It seems to me that we have let our beards and moustaches grow, and have become the most hirsute people in Europe; but a *Charivari* Englishman, or a Gustave Doré Englishman, or a Bouffes Parisiennes Englishman, is always the same simpering creature, with smooth upper and under lip, and bushy whiskers. Types must be preserved, you may argue. As a simpering and whiskered creature, the Englishman is best known abroad, and foreigners have as much right to preserve him intact as we have to preserve our traditional John Bull. But may I be allowed to point out that a type may become so worn and blunted as to be no longer worth printing from? For instance, there is the Frenchman in a cocked-hat and a pigtail and high-heeled shoes, and with a little fiddle protruding from his hinder pocket. That Frenchman's name was Johnny Crapaud. His diet was frogs. His profession was to teach dancing. One Englishman could always thrash three Johnny Crapauds. We have broken up that type for old metal; and it has been melted again, and recast into something more nearly approaching the actual Crapaud. Let me see; how many years is it since the lamented John Leech drew that droll cartoon in *Punch* entitled Foreign Affairs? It must be a quarter of a century, at least. He delineated the Frenchman of his day to the life: the Frenchman of the old Quadrant and Fricourt's and

Dubourg's, and the stuffy little passport-office in Poland-street. That Frenchman—long haired, dirty, smouchy, greasy—has passed away. Before he died, Mr. Leech found out the new types; the fat yet dapper 'Mossoos,' with the large shirt-fronts and the dwarfed hats, who engage a barouche and a valet de place at Pagliano's, and go for 'a promenade to Richmond.' And had Mr. Leech's life been prolonged, he would have discovered the still later type of Frenchman—the Parisian of the Lower Empire, the Frenchman of the Jockey Club and the Courses de Vincennes—the Frenchman who has his clothes made by Mr. Poole, or by the most renowned Parisian imitator of the artist of Saville-row, who reads *Le Sport* and goes upon le Tourff, and rides in his 'bromm' and eats his 'laounch,' and, if he could only be cured of the habit of riding like a miller's sack and sitting outside a café on the Boulevards, would pass muster very well for a twin-brother of our exquisites of the Raleigh and Gatt's.

It is all of no use, however, I fear. For good old true-blue Toryism, and a determined hatred to new-fangled ways, socially speaking, you must go abroad, and especially to France. In prose and verse, in books and newspapers, in lithographs, and etchings, and terra-cotta statuettes, the traditional Englishman and the traditional Englishwoman will continue to appear as something quite different from that which they really are. In the halcyon day when it is discovered that we are no more 'perfidious' than our neigh-

bours, and that, in the way of greedy rapacity for the petty profits of trade, the French are ten times more of a nation of shopkeepers than we are—then, but not till then, it may be acknowledged that the English female's anatomy is not made up exclusively of right angles, and that the first word in an Englishwoman's vocabulary is not always 'Shocking!'

KING PIPPIN'S PALACE.

I DEEPLY regret that it should be my duty to sound the alarm; but I am constrained to state my fears that there is something the matter with our old and, generally, esteemed friend the Dwarf. I don't meet him in society, that is to say, at the fairs as I was wont to do; and although I do not overlook the fact that I have ceased to attend fairs, and that, indeed, there are very few fairs of the old kind left to frequent, it is difficult to avoid the unpleasant conviction that dwarfs, as a race, are dying out. Very recently, in his strange, eloquent romance, *L'Homme qui rit*, M. Victor Hugo has told us that the pigmy, preferably monstrous and deformed, whose pictured semblance is to be found in so many works of the old Italian and German masters, was, to most intents and purposes, a manufactured article. That mysterious association of the 'Comprachicos,' of whom M. Hugo has told us so many strange things, pursued, among their varied branches of industry, the art of fabricating hunchbacked, abdominous, hydrocephalous, and spindle-shanked dwarfs for the European market: the purchasers being the princes, potentates, and wealthy nobles of the continent. The Comprachicos

would seem to have borrowed the mystery of dwarf-making from the Chinese, who had an agreeable way of putting a young child into a pot of arbitrary form, from which the top and bottom had been knocked out, and in the sides of which were two holes, through which the juvenile patient's arms protruded. The merry consequence was that young master's body, if he did not die during the process, grew to be of the shape of the pot, and, so far as the torso went, the order of amateurs for a spherical dwarf, or an oval dwarf, or a hexagonal dwarf, or a dwarf with knobs on his chest, or an 'egg-and-tongue' pattern on his shoulders, could be executed with promptitude and dispatch.*

But we have another informant, of perhaps greater weight and authority, who has told us in what manner dwarfs, and bandy, and rickety, and crooked-spined

* Setting M. Hugo's wild myth of the Comprachicos entirely on one side, most students of the social history of England are aware that the custom of kidnapping children (generally to be sold as slaves in the West Indies or the American plantations) was frightfully prevalent in this country in the seventeenth, and during the early part of the eighteenth century, and that Bristol was dishonourably distinguished as the port whence the greater number of the hapless victims were dispatched beyond sea. And it is a very curious circumstance, which appears to have been overlooked by Lord Macaulay in his notice of Jeffries, that the infamous judge, shortly before the Bloody Assize, went down to Bristol, and delivered to the grand jury at the assizes a most eloquent and indignant charge, overflowing with sentiments of humanity, bearing on the practice of kidnapping children for the plantations—a practice which his lordship roundly accused the corporation of Bristol of actively aiding and abetting for their own advantage and gain. Jeffries' charge is preserved in the library of the British Museum, and is as edifying to read as the sentimental ballad 'What is Love?' by Mr. Thomas Paine, or as would be an Essay upon Cruelty to Animals, with proposals for the suppression thereof, by the late Emperor Nero.

children can be manufactured without the aid either of the Comprachicos or of the Chinese potters. The learned and amiable Cheselden has dwelt minutely in his *Anatomy* on the wickedly cruel and barbarous folly which marked the system of nursing babies in his time, and has shown how the practice of tightly swaddling and unskilfully carrying infants was calculated to cripple and deform their limbs, and to stunt their growth. We have grown wonderfully wiser since Cheselden's time, although I have heard some cynics mutter that the custom of growing children in pipkins could not have been more detrimental to health or to the symmetry of the human form than is the modern fashion of tight-lacing.

Be all this as it may, I still hold that the dwarf—well, the kind of dwarf who can be seen for a penny at a fair—continues, as the French say, 'to make himself desired.' Surely his falling off must be due to the surcease of the manufacture. Old manufactured dwarfs are as difficult to light upon as Mortlake tapestry or Chelsea china, simply, I suppose, because tapestry is no longer woven at Mortlake, and Chelsea produces no more porcelain ware. To an amateur of dwarfs it is positively distressing to read the numerous detailed accounts which the historians have left us of bygone troglodytes. Passing by such world-famous manikins as Sir Jeffery Hudson and Count Borulawski, where can one hope, in this degenerate age, to light on a Madame Teresia, better known by the designation of the Corsican Fairy, who

came to London in 1773, being then thirty years of age, thirty-four inches high, and weighing twenty-six pounds? 'She possessed much vivacity and spirit, could speak Italian and French with fluency, and gave the most inquisitive mind an agreeable entertainment.' England has produced a rival to Madame Teresia in Miss Anne Shepherd, who was three feet ten inches in height, and was married, in Charles the First's time, to Richard Gibson, Esq., page of the backstairs to his majesty, and a distinguished miniature painter. Mr. Gibson was just forty-six inches high, and he and his bride were painted 'in whole length' by Sir Peter Lely. The little couple are said to have had nine children, who all attained the usual standard of mankind; and three of the boys, according to the chronicles of the backstairs, enlisted in the Life Guards.

But what are even your Hudsons and your Gibsons, your Corsican Fairies and your Anne Shepherds, to the dwarfs of antiquity? Where am I to look for a parallel to the homunculus who flourished in Egypt in the time of the Emperor Theodosius, and who was so small of body that he resembled a partridge, yet had all the functions of a man, and would sing tunably? Mark Antony is said to have owned a dwarf called Sisyphus, who was not of the full height of two feet, and was yet of a lively wit. Had this Sisyphus been doomed to roll a stone it must surely have been no bigger than a schoolboy's marble. Ravisius — who was Ravisius? — narrates that Au-

gustus Cæsar exhibited in his plays one Lucius, a young man born of honest parents, who was twenty-three inches high, and weighed seventeen pounds; yet had he a strong voice. In the time of Jamblichus, also, lived Alypius of Alexandria, a most excellent logician, and a famous philosopher, but so small in body that he hardly exceeded a cubit, or one foot five inches and a half in height. And, finally, Carden tells us—but who believes Carden?—that he saw a man of full age in Italy, not above a cubit high, and who was carried about in a parrot's cage. 'This,' remarks Wanley, in his *Wonders of the Little World*, 'would have passed my belief had I not been told by a gentleman of a clear reputation, that he saw a man at Sienna, about two years since, not exceeding the same stature. A Frenchman he was, of the county of Limosin, with a formal beard, who was likewise shown in a cage for money, at the end whereof was a little hatch into which he retired, and when the assembly was full came forth and played on an instrument.' The very thing we have all seen at the fairs, substituting the simulacrum of a three-storied house for a cage, and not forgetting the modern improvements of the diminutive inmate ringing a bell, and firing a pistol out of the first-floor window!

And after banqueting on these bygone dwarfs, who were scholars and gentlemen, as well as monstrosities, for was not Alypius, cited above, a famous logician and philosopher? and did not Richard Gibson, Esq., teach Queen Anne the art of drawing, and

proceed on a special mission to Holland to impart artistic instruction to the Princess of Orange? after dwelling on the dwarfs who formed part of the retinue of William of Normandy when he invaded England, and who held the bridle of the Emperor Otho's horse; after remembering the dwarfs whom Dominichino and Rafaelle, Velasquez and Paul Veronese have introduced in their pictures; after this rich enjoyment of dwarfish record I am thrown back on General Tom Thumb. I grant the General, and the Commodore, and their ladykind a decent meed of acknowledgment. I confess them calm, self-possessed, well-bred, and innocuous; but I have no heart to attend their 'levées.' Nutt, in the caricature of a naval uniform, does not speak to my heart; I have no ambition to see Thumb travestied as the late Emperor Napoleon —that conqueror could, on occasion, cause himself to appear even smaller than Thumb—nor am I desirous of purchasing photographic cartes de visite of Minnie Warren. *My* dwarf is the gorgeously-attired little pagod of the middle ages; the dwarf who pops out of a pie at a court banquet; the dwarf who runs between the court-jester's legs and trips him up; the dwarf of the king of Brobdingnag, who is jealous of Gulliver, and souses his rival in a bowl of cream, and gets soundly whipped for his pains. Or, in default of this pigmy, give me back the dwarf of my youth in his sham three-storied house, with his tinkling bell and sounding pistol.

It is not to be, I presume. These many years

past I have moodily disbursed in divers parts of the world sundry francs, lire, guilders, florins, thalers, reals, dollars, piastres, and mark-banco for the sight of dwarfs; but they (Thumb and his company included) have failed to come up to my standard of dwarfish excellence. Did you ever meet with anything or anybody that could come up to that same standard? Man never is, but always to be blest; still, although my dreams of dwarfs have not as yet been fully realised, I have been able to enjoy the next best thing to fulfilment. I call to mind perhaps the wonderfullest dwarf's house existing on the surface of this crazy globe. It is a house in the construction and the furniture of which many thousands of pounds were expended; and it was built by a king for his son. It is for this reason that I have called the diminutive mansion 'The Palace of King Pippin.'

King Pippin's Palace is in Spain, and has been shamefully neglected by English tourists in that interesting country. For my part I think that it would be a great advantage to picturesque literature if the Alhambra and the Alcazar, the Bay of Cadiz and the Rock of Gibraltar, the Sierra Morena and the Mezquita of Cordova, the Cathedral of Burgos and the Bridge of Toledo, could be eliminated altogether from Spanish topography. By these means travellers in Spain would have a little more leisure to attend to a number of 'cosas de España' which are at present passed by almost without notice. Among them is this incomparable dwarf's house of mine. You will

observe that I have excluded the Escorial from the catalogue of places which English sight-seers in the Peninsula might do well, for a time, to forget. The Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo must needs be visited, for King Pippin's Palace is a dependency of that extraordinary pile. Few tourists have the courage to admit, in print at least, that this palace-monastery or monastery-palace of the Escorial is a gigantic bore. When it was my lot to visit it, my weariness began even before I had entered its halls; for in the railway carriage which conveyed our party from Madrid to the 'Gridiron station' there was a fidgety little Andalusian, a maker of guitar-strings, I think he was, at Utrera, who was continually rebounding on the cushions like a parched pea in a fire-shovel, and crying out to us, 'El edificio, caballeros, donde está el edificio?' It was his first visit to the northern provinces of his native country, and he was burning to see the 'edificio.' To him, evidently, there was but one edifice in the world, and that was the Escorial. When at last he caught sight of its sullen façades, its stunted dome and blue-slate roofs, the little Andalusian fell into a kind of ecstasy, and protruded so much of his body out of the carriage-window, that I expected him every moment to disappear altogether. To my surprise, however, when the train drew up at the station he did not alight, but murmuring the conventional 'Pues, señores, echemos un cigarito,' 'Well, gentlemen, let us make a little cigar,' calmly rolled up a tube of paper with tobacco,

lit it, and adding, 'Vamos al Norte,' subsided into sleep, and, the train aiding, pursued his journey to the Pyrenees, or Paris, or the North Pole, or wheresoever else he was bound. He was clearly a philosopher. He had seen 'el edificio' from afar off. Was not that enough? I daresay when he went back to Utrera he talked guide-book by the page to his friends, and minutely described all the marvels of the interior of the palace. I rarely think of the little Andalusian without recalling Sheridan's remark to his son Tom, about the coal-pits: 'Can't you *say* you've been down?'

The 'edifice' itself is really and without exaggeration a bore. The good pictures have all been taken away to swell the attractions of the Real Museo at Madrid; the jolly monks have been driven out, and replaced by a few meagre, atrabilious-looking, shovel-hatted seminarists (even these, since the last political earthquake in Spain, may have disappeared); and it is with extreme difficulty that you can persuade the custodes to show you the embroidered vestments in the sacristy, or the illuminated manuscripts in the library. The guardians of every public building in Spain have a settled conviction that all foreign travellers are Frenchmen, who, following the notable example of Marshals Soult and Victor in the Peninsular War, are bent on stealing something. Moreover, the inspection of embroidered copes, dalmatics, and chasubles, soon palls on sight-seers who are not crazy on the subject of Ritualism; and as for

being trotted through a vast library when you have no time to read the books, all I can say is, that in this respect I prefer a bookstall in Gray's-inn-lane, with free access to the 'twopenny box,' to the library of the Escorial, to the Bibliothèque (ex-)Impériale, the Bodleian, Sion College, and the library of St. Mark to boot. The exterior of the Escorial, again, is absolutely hideous; its grim granite walls, pierced with innumerable eyelet-holes, with green shutters, remind the spectator of the Wellington Barracks, Colney-Hatch Lunatic-Asylum, and the Great Northern Hotel at King's-Cross. The internal decorations principally consist of huge, sprawling, wall-and-ceiling frescoes by Luca Giordano, surnamed 'Luca fa Presto,' or Luke in a Hurry. This Luke the Labourer has stuck innumerable saints, seraphs, and other celestial personages upon the plaster. He executed his apotheoses by the yard, for which he was paid according to a fixed tariff—a reduction, I suppose, being made for clouds; and the result of his work is about as interesting as that of Sir James Thornhill in the Painted Hall of Greenwich Hospital. Almost an entire day must be spent if you wish to see the Escorial thoroughly, and you grow, at last, fretful and peevish wellnigh to distraction at the jargon of the guides, with their monotonous statistics of the eleven thousand windows of the place, the two thousand and two feet of its area, the sixty-three fountains, the twelve cloisters, the sixteen 'patios' or courtyards, the eighty staircases, and so forth. As

for the relics preserved of that nasty old man Philip the Second, his greasy hat, his walking-stick, his shabby elbow-chair, the board he used to rest his gouty leg on, they never moved me. There is something beautifully and pathetically interesting in the minutest trifle which remains to remind us of Mary Queen of Scots. Did you ever see her watch, in the shape of a death's-head, the works in the brain-pan, and the dial enamelled on the base of the jaw? But who would care about a personal memento of Bloody Queen Mary? She was our countrywoman, but most of us wish to forget her bad individuality utterly. Should we care anything more about her Spanish husband?

To complete the lugubrious impressions which gather round you in this museum of cruelty, superstition, and madness, you are taken to an appalling sepulchre underground: a circular vault, called, absurdly enough, the 'Pantheon,' where, on ranges of marble shelves, are sarcophagi containing the ashes of all the kings and queens who have afflicted Spain since the time of Charles the Fifth. The bonehouse is rendered all the more hideous by the fact of its being ornamented in the most garishly theatrical manner with porphyry and verde antique, with green and yellow jasper, with bronze gilt bas-reliefs, and carvings in variegated marble, and other gimcracks. There is an old English locution which laughs at the man who would put a brass knocker on a pigsty-door. Is such an architect worthier of ridicule than

he who paints and gilds and tricks-up a charnel-house to the similitude of a playhouse? As, with a guttering wax-taper in your hand, you ascend the staircase leading from the Pantheon into daylight and the world again, your guide whispers to you that to the right is another and ghastlier Golgotha, where the junior scions of Spanish royalty are buried, or rather where their coffins lie huddled together pell-mell. The polite name for this place, which might excite the indignation of 'graveyard' Walker (he put a stop to intramural interments in England, and got no thanks for his pains), is the 'Pantheon of the Infantes.' The common people call it, with much more brevity and infinitely more eloquence, 'El Pudridero,' the 'rotting-place.' The best guide-book you can take with you to this portion of the Escorial is Jeremy Taylor's sermon on Death.

Once out of the Escorial, 'Luke's iron crown'—I mean the crown of Luca fa Presto's ponderous heroes—is at once removed from your brow, on which it has been pressing with the deadest of weights. Once rid of the Pantheon, and the stone staircases, and the slimy cloisters, and you feel inclined to chirrup, almost. The gardens are handsome, although shockingly out of repair; but bleak as is the site, swept by the almost ceaseless mountain blasts of the Guadarrama range, it is something to be of rid Luca fa Presto, and Philip the Second, and St. Lawrence and his gridiron, and all their gloomy company. You breathe again; and down in the village yonder there is a not

bad inn, called the Biscaina, where they cook very decent omelettes, and where the wine is drinkable. But before you think of dining, you must see King Pippin's Palace.

This is the 'Casita del Principe de abajo,' the 'little house of the prince on the heights,' and was built by Juan de Villanueva for Charles the Fourth, when heir-apparent. The only circumstances, perhaps, under which a king of Spain can be contemplated with complacency are those of childhood. In Madrid I used always to have a sneaking kindness for the infantes and infantas—'los niños de España,'—who, with their nurses and governesses, and their escort of dragoons and lancers, used to be driven every afternoon, in their gilt coaches drawn by fat mules, through the Puerta del Sol to the Retiro. The guard at the Palace of the Gobernacion would turn out, the trumpets would be flourished bravely as 'los niños' went by. Poor little urchins! In the pictures of Don Diego Velasquez, the 'niños,' in their little ruffs, and kirtles, and farthingales, or their little starched doublets and trunk-hose, with their chubby peachy cheeks, their ruddy lips, and great melting black eyes, look irresistibly fascinating. Ah! my infantes and infantas of Don Diego, why did you not remain for aye at the toddlekins' stage? why did you grow up to be tyrants, and madmen, and bigots, and imbeciles, and no better than you should have been? This Carlos the Fourth, for instance, for whom King Pippin's Palace was built, made an exceedingly bad

end of it. He was the king who was led by the nose by a worthless wife, and a more worthless favourite, Godoy, who was called 'Prince of the Peace,' and who lived to be quite forgotten, and to die in a garret in Paris. Carlos the Fourth was the idiot who allowed Napoleon to kidnap him. He was the father of the execrable Ferdinand the Seventh, the betrayer of his country, the restorer of the Inquisition, and the embroiderer of petticoats for the Virgin.

King, or rather Prince Pippin, Charles the Third's son, is represented in a very curious style of portraiture, in one of the apartments of the Escorial itself, a suite fitted up by his father in anti-monastic style that is to say, in the worst kind of Louis Quinze rococo. The king employed the famous Goya to make a series of designs to be afterwards woven on a large scale in tapestry; and Goya consequently produced some cartoons which, with their reproductions in loom-work, may be regarded as the burlesque antipodes to the immortal patterns which Rafaelle set the weavers of Arras. In one of the Goya hangings you see the juvenile members of the royal family at their sports, attended by a select number of young scions of the sangre azul. At what do you think they are playing? at *bull-fighting*: a game very popular among the blackguard little street-boys of Madrid to this day. One boy plays Bos. He has merely to pop a cloth over his head, holding two sticks passing through holes in the cloth at obtuse angles to his head, to represent the horns of the animal. The

'picadores' are children pickaback, who, with canes for lances, tilt at the bull. The 'chulos' trail their jackets, the 'bandarilleros' fling wreathed hoopsticks for darts, in admirable caricature of the real blood-thirsty game you see in the bull-ring. Prince Pippin of course is the 'matador,' the slayer. He stands alone, superb and magnanimous, intrepidity in his mien, fire in his eye, and a real little Toledo rapier in his hand. Will the bull dare to run at the heir-apparent of the throne of Spain and the Indies? Quien sabe? Train up a child in the way he should go; and a youth of bull-fighting is a fit preparative for a manhood of cruelty and an old age of bigoted superstition.

It is somewhat difficult to give an idea of the precise size of Pippin's Palace. Mr. Ford, who speaks of the entire structure with ineffable contempt, says that it is 'just too small to live in, and too large to wear on a watch-chain;' but I maintain that the Casita del Principe is quite big enough to be the country residence of Thumb, or Nutt, or Miss Warren, or Gibson, or Hudson, or Ann Shepherd, or Madame Teresia, or Wybrand Lolkes the Dutch dwarf; a wonderful little fellow with a head like a dolphin's, no perceptible trunk, and two little spindle-shanks like the legs of a skeleton clock. There should properly be a statue cast from the Manneken at Brussels in the vestibule of the Casita; but, if I recollect aright, the only object of sculpture in the hall is a life-size cast of the Apollo Belvedere, whose head of course touches the palatial

ceiling. Could that inanimate effigy stand on tiptoe, he would assuredly send the first floor flying; and could he perform but one vertical leap, he would have the roof off the palace in the twinkling of a bedpost. There is a tiny grand staircase, which (from dolorous experience) I know to be somewhat of a tight fit for a stout tourist; and to increase the exquisite grotesqueness of the whole affair, the walls are panelled in green and yellow jasper and porphyry, and there are verde-antique columns and scagliola pilasters, and bas-reliefs in gilt bronze on every side, just as there are in the horrible tomb-house hard by. There are dozens of rooms in King Pippin's Palace: dining-rooms, audience-chambers, council-chambers, bed-rooms, libraries, ante-chambers, boudoirs, guard-rooms, and ball-rooms, the dimensions of which vary between those of so many store-cupboards, and so many midshipmen's sea-chests. But the pearl, the cream, the consummation of the crack-brained joke is, that the furniture does not in any way harmonise with the proportions of the building. The house is a baby one, but the furniture is grown up. The chairs and tables are suited for the accommodation of adults of full growth. The walls are hung with life-size portraits of the Spanish Bourbons. The busts, statuettes, French clocks, chandeliers, China gimcracks, and ivory baubles, are precisely such as you might see in a palace inhabited by grown-up kings and princes. The whole place is a pippin into which a crazy king has endeavoured to cram the contents of a pumpkin;

and, but for the high sense I entertain of the obligations of decorum, and the indelicacy of wounding the susceptibilities of foreigners, I might, had the proper appliances been at hand, have wound up my inspection of the Palace of King Pippin, by ringing a shrill peal on a hand-bell, or firing a pistol out of the first-floor window.

STALLS.

It may not have occurred to you, amæne reader, to trouble yourself much concerning the Philosophy of Stalls; if, haply, you have ever thought it worth your while to inquire whether there was anything philosophical connected with a stall, at all. To my mind there is, and much. To me a stall typifies, in an intense degree, the quality of selfishness. I draw a direct alliance between a stall and celibacy. I hold the possession of a stall to be linked with the ideas of independence, of isolation from, and superiority to, the rest of mankind. In a stall, properly so termed, you cannot put two people. The stalled ox is alone, and may look with infinite contempt on the poor sheep huddled together in a fold; the cobbler who lived in his stall, which served him for kitchen and parlour and all, was, I will go bail, a bachelor. Robinson Crusoe, for a very long time, occupied a stall, and was monarch of all he surveyed. When Man Friday came, the recluse began to yearn to mingle with the world again. Diogenes in his tub perfectly fulfils the idea of an installed egotist. From his tub-stall he could witness at leisure the entire grand opera of Corinth. I have heard of a royal duke—one of the past generation of royal dukes; burly, bluff princes

in blue coats and brass buttons, who said everything twice over, drank hard, swore a good deal, and were immensely popular at the Crown and Anchor and the Thatched House Taverns—who, being in Windsor one Sunday afternoon, thought he would like to attend divine service in St. George's Chapel. Of course he was a Knight of the Garter, and had his stall in the old gothic fane, with his casque and banner above, and a brass plate let in to the oaken carving, recording what a high, mighty, and puissant prince he was. The chapel happened to be very crowded, and as H.R.H. essayed to pass through the throng towards his niche in the choir, a verger whispered him deferentially, that a distinguished foreign visitor, his Decrepitude the Grand Duke of Pfenningwurst-Schinkenbraten, had been popped into the place of the English Duke. 'Don't care a rush—a rush,' quoth H.R.H., poking his walking-cane into the spine of a plebeian in front of him. 'Want to get to my stall —my stall.' And from it, I suppose, he eventually succeeded in ousting the intruder from Germany. Was not H.R.H. in the right? His stall was his vine and his fig-tree, and who was there to make him afraid?

So much for stalls in the abstract. Practically, a stall may be defined as a place of occupation, in relative degrees, of a canon, a chorister, a cow, a cobbler, or a connoisseur. To study stalls most profitably in their ecclesiastical or monastic aspect, you should go to Flanders or to Spain. In the grand old cathedrals in those countries, the traveller has always

free access to the choir, and can take his surfeit of contemplation of the stalls. They will be found, to the observant mind, replete with human interest. They may be peopled with priests. Pursy prebendaries, dozing the doze of the just, and dreaming placidly, perchance, of good fat capon and clotted cream, while the brawny choirmen at the lecterns are thundering from huge oak-bound and brass-clamped folios, on the parchment pages of which corpulent minims and breves flounder over crimson lines; pale, preoccupied priests, fretfully crimping the folds of their surplices, and enviously eyeing my Lord Archbishop yonder, awfully enthroned, with his great mitre on his head, and his emerald ring glancing on the plump white hand which he complacently spreads over the carved arm of his chair of state. Will they ever come to sit in that chair? those pale, preoccupied men may be thinking. Will they ever wear a mitre, and hold out their hands for an obedient flock to kiss? Or will dignity and power and wealth fall to the lot of those drowsy prebendaries?

More absorbing, even, in interest than the stalls in the choir of a cathedral are those in a convent chapel. The reason is, I suppose, that a monk has always been to me a Mystery. A nun I can more easily understand, for the monastic state, in its best and purest acceptation, is a dream or an ecstasy; and there are vast numbers of women who pass their whole lives in a dreamy and ecstatic frame of mind, and in a species of unobtrusive hysterics. But the monk, with

his manhood, and his great strong frame, and the fire of ambition lambent in his eye, and his lips firm-set in volition, always puzzles me. Continental physicians will tell you that in every monastery there will be found a certain proportion of mad monks:—friars who have strange lunes, and hear Voices while they are sweeping out the chapel or extinguishing the altar-candles, and to whom the saints and angels in the pictures on the walls are living and breathing personages. I remember a dwarfish Cappuccino at Rome once executing a kind of holy hornpipe before Guido's famous painting of the Archangel vanquishing the Demon, and, as he jigged, taunting the fiend on the canvas on the low estate to which he had fallen, and derisively bidding him to use his claws and fangs. Nor do I think that I was ever more terrified in my life than by the behaviour of a gaunt young friar in the Catacombs of San Sebastiano, who, opposite the empty tomb of a renowned martyr, suddenly took to waving his taper above his head, and to abusing the Twelve Cæsars. He was our guide, and I feared the candle would go out, and trembled to think what would become of us, lost in Necropolis. But mad monks, or dreamy or ecstatic monks, are sufficiently rare, it is to be surmised. Most of the wearers of the cowl and sandals with whom I have made acquaintance, seemed to be perfectly well aware of what they were about; and a spirit of shrewd and pungent humour and drollery is not by any means an uncommon characteristic of male inmates of the cloister.

As for a Knight of the Garter in his stall, I regard him simply as an Awful Being. Understand that, to strike one with sufficient awe, he should be, not in plain dress, but in the 'full fig' of his most noble order: a costume more imposing than the full uniform of the captain of a man-o'-war; and *that*, backed by the man-o'-war herself in the offing, can be warranted to send any black king on the west coast of Africa into fits. But a K.G., with his garter on, with his sweeping velvet robe, with his collar and his George, with his tassels and badges and bows of ribbons, next to Solomon in all his glory is the most sumptuous sight I can conceive. The very stall he sits in is historical; a knight of his own name occupied it three hundred years ago. It bears brazen chronicle of the doughtiest barons that ever lived. What should one do to get made a K.G., and to earn the privilege of sitting in such a stall? Would the genius of Shakespeare or Dante, would the learning of Boyle or Milton, would the imagination of a Tennyson, the graphic powers of a Millais, the researches of a Faraday—would even the giant intellect of a Brougham, help a man in the climbing upward to that stall? Not much, I fancy. Its occupancy is to be obtained only by one process, ridiculously simple, yet to be mastered only by very few children of humanity. 'Vous vous êtes donné la peine de naître,' says Figaro to Count Almaviva, in the play. To be K.G.'d, you must take the trouble to be born of the K.G. caste.

But envy, avaunt! Social fate is not without its compensations, and there are stalls and stalls. Lend me a guinea, and for a whole evening, from eight to nearly midnight, I can sit supreme in a stall, solitary, grand, absolute; for who shall dare to turn me out? The stall is mine, to have and to hold corporeally until the curtain has fallen on the last tableau of the ballet, and (in imagination at least) I can hang my banner and my casque over my stall, and deem myself a high, mighty, and puissant prince. As the process, put into practice, might interfere with the comfort of the patrons of the Royal Italian Opera, I content myself with hanging my overcoat over the back of my stall, and placing my collapsible Gibus beneath it. I notice a large party of beautiful dames and damsels in a box on the pit tier, who, I am vain enough to think, are intently inspecting me through their opera-glasses. I plume myself. I pull down my wristbands, I smooth my shirt-front, and caress the bows of my cravat. I turn the favourite facet of my diamond ring well on to the box on the pit tier. If you are the sun, shall you not shine? I am taken, I fondly hope, for one of the Upper Ten. I am aware, from eyesight acquaintance with the aristocracy, that my neighbour on the right, with the purple wig, the varnished pumps, and the ear-trump, is Field Marshal Lord Viscount Dumdum, that great Indian hero; and that the yellow-faced little man on my left, with the yellow ribbon at his button-hole, is the Troglodyte ambassador. Behind

me is Sir Hercules Hoof, of the Second Life-Guards. In front of me is the broad back—I wish, in respect to the back, that it wasn't quite so broad—of Mr. Bargebeam, Q.C. How are that family in the pit tier to know that I am not a nobleman, a diplomatist, a guardsman, or a queen's counsel? I am clean. I had my hair dyed the day before yesterday. My boots are polished; my neckcloth is starched stiff: my stall is as big as anybody else's. How is beauty in the boxes to tell that I came in (failing to borrow one-pound-one) with an order?

The playhouse stall is a thoroughly modern innovation; and even the pit of the Italian theatres of the Renaissance was destitute of seats. When Sterne first visited the opera in Paris, the groundlings stood to witness the performance, and sentinels with fixed bayonets were posted to appease tumults, as in the well-known case quoted in the 'Sentimental Journey,' when the irate dwarf threatened to cut off the pigtail of the tall German. I am old enough to remember when the pittites in the Scala at Milan stood. You paid, I think, an Austrian florin—one and eightpence—for bare admission to the house, and then you took your chance of lighting upon some lady who would invite you to a seat in her box; or some bachelor acquaintance who, having had enough of the performance, would surrender to you his reserved seat, near the orchestra, for the rest of the evening. Seated pits have always been common in our English theatres, owing to the strong determi-

nation of the people to make themselves comfortable whenever it was possible to do so; and these reserved seats of the Scala were the beginning of the exclusive seats we call stalls. They are not older than the era of the dominion of the Austrians in Lombardy, after the downfall of Napoleon the First. There were many Milanese nobles not wealthy enough to take boxes for the season, and too proud to spunge on their friends every evening for a back seat in a 'palco,' and too patriotic to mingle in the standing-up area with the Austrian officers, who, according to garrison regulations, were admitted to the Scala at the reduced price of ninepence half-penny. So the manager of the Scala hit upon the crafty device of dividing the rows of benches near the orchestra into compartments, each wide enough to accommodate a single person, and the seats of which could be turned up as in the choir of a cathedral. Moreover, these seats were neatly fitted with hasps and padlocks, so that the subscriber could lock up his seat when, between the acts, he strolled into the caffé for refreshment. Perhaps he was absent from Milan during the whole operatic season; and, if he did not choose to lend the key of his stall to a friend of the right political way of thinking, the seat remained inexorably closed. The system had a triple charm: First, the subscriber could revel to the fullest extent in the indulgence of that dog-in-the manger-like selfishness, which I have held to be inseparably connected with stall-holding; next, he

could baffle the knavish boxkeepers, with whom in an Italian theatre you can always drive an immoral bargain, and by a trifling bribe secure a better seat than that for which you have originally paid; finally, he could obviate the possibility of his stall being contaminated by the sedentary presence of any Austrian general of high rank who happened to be an amateur of legs. High-handed as were the proceedings of the Tedeschi in Italy, they were wisely reluctant to interfere with the social habits of the people.

Just before the great French Revolution, it became the fashion to place arm-chairs close to the orchestra of the Academy of Music for the use of noble visitors, who came down from their boxes to take a closer survey of the coryphées; but these were fauteuils at large; they were few in number, and could be shifted from place to place at will. Veritable stalls are those which, albeit they are fitted with arm-rests, are still immovably screwed to the floor; and such stalls, old playgoers will bear me out, are things of very recent introduction in our theatres. The pit of Her Majesty's Theatre was once the resort of the grandest dandies in London. Going over the new structure the other day, I observed that the pit proper had been almost entirely suppressed, and that stalls monopolised seven-tenths of the sitting-room of the ground area. In English theatres a similar monopoly has been from year to year gradually gaining strength. The most rubbishing little houses have now numerous rows of stalls, from which bonnets are

of course banished; and the pit is being quietly elbowed out of existence. 'The third row of the pit' was once a kind of bench of judgment—I don't say of justice—on which those tremendous dispensers of dramatic fame and fortune, the critics, sat. Our papas and mammas did not despise the pit of old Drury; and I have heard tell of a lady of title who paid to the pit to see Master Betty, and who took with her a bag of sandwiches, and some sherry in a bottle. I think I heard tell that she lost her shoe in the crowd before the doors were opened.

Should this remarkable extension of the stall system be considered as a blessing or an evil? Has it not tended to the vast increase of selfishness, supercilliousness, and the pride of place? Dear sir, if I were a Professor of Paradoxes, I might tell you that the more selfish, the more supercilious, and the prouder of our places we are, the likelier will be the attainment of universal happiness. I might whisper to you that virtue is only selfishness in a sublime degree. But I am a professor of nothing; and I dread paradoxes—having had a relative once who was afflicted with them, and died. So I go back to stalls.

The stalled ox, and the stalled cows in the byres of Brock, in Holland, with their tails tied up to rings in the rafters, I leave to their devices, for my talk is of men and not of beasts. But lovingly do I glance at the cobbler in his stall—a merry man with twinkling eyes, a blue-black mazzard, and somewhat of a

copper nose, for ever cuddling his lapstone, smoothing his leather with sounding thwacks, drawing out his waxed string, working and singing, and bandying repartee with the butchers' boys and the fishwives passing his hutch. I would Mr. Longfellow had sung of that cobbler; for as many tuneful things could be said about Crispin, as about the Village Blacksmith. That he has been left unsung, I mourn sincerely; for times change, and types of humanity vanish, and I am beginning to miss that cobbler. Metropolitan improvements are unfavourable to him; our pride and vanity militate against him; for somehow we don't care about seeing our boots mended in public, nowadays. In old times the cobbler's stall was permitted to nestle in the basement of mansions almost aristocratic in their respectability; but, at present, no architect would dream of building a new cobbler's stall in a new house, and the old ones are fast disappearing. Crispin has risen in the world. He has taken a shop, and 'repairs ladies' and gentlemen's boots and shoes with punctuality and dispatch.'

The term 'stall,' as applied to the board on trestles, or supported perchance by a decayed washing-tub, laid out with apples, sweetstuff, or oysters, and presided over by an old Irishwoman with a stringless black bonnet flattened down on a mob-cap, I consider a misnomer. It lacks the idea of exclusive possession which should attach to a stall. The apple, or sweetstuff, or oyster woman is but a tenant at will. She has no fee simple. She may be harried by the police,

and petitioned against by churlish shopkeeping neighbours, jealous of her poor outdoor traffic. Drunken roysterers may overturn her frail structure; a reckless hansom-cab driver may bring her to irretrievable crash and ruin; rival apple-women may compete with her at the opposite street corners; and passing costermongers, with strong-wheeled barrows, may gird at her, and disparage her wares. 'Tis not a stall, at which she sits, but a stand, a mere thing of tolerance and sufferance: here to-day, and gone to-morrow, if the Proud Man chooses despitefully to use poor Biddy. But once give me sitting-room in a cathedral stall, and, by cock and pye, I will not budge! You may threaten to disestablish and disendow me, but I will carry my stall about with me, as old gentlemen at the sea-side carry their camp-stools. And if at last, by means of a measure forced on an Unwilling Nation by ministers more abandoned in their principles, Sir, than Sejanus, Empson, Dudley, Polignac, Peyronnet, or the late Sir Robert Walpole, you declare that my Stall must be abolished, you shall Compensate me for its loss at a rate as rich as though I had always had it clamped with gold, and stuffed with bank notes.

Dunks took to drinking; and as for his matrimonial affairs, the late Sir Cresswell Cresswell was fain to take *them* in hand; and a pretty case was Dunks *versus* Dunks, I promise you. Having sold or mortgaged every 'carcass' he possessed, and undermined his own with strong liquors, Dunks went into the Bankruptcy Court, and soon afterwards died, of a severe attack of rum-and-water, and trade-assignee, on the brain—a wholly ruined and still uncertificated trader. It was a sad end for a man who had once served the office of churchwarden, and driven his own chaise-cart—who had banked with the London and County—and whose brother-in-law's uncle was reputed to be the proprietor of a New-River share; but the mills of the gods grind small, and Dunks, to my thinking, only met in his decadence with his deserts. When I spoke of 'carcasses' just now, I did not intend to imply that Dunks was a wholesale butcher. *His* carcasses were of bricks and mortar, and of his own making. Dunks was a builder. He took the contract once for the Doleful-hill Lunatic Asylum, by which he did so well—notwithstanding the complaints of the architect in respect to the bricks—that

he was enabled to build a large number of semi-detached villas, and a still larger quantity of 'carcasses,' as a speculation of his own. Had he been prudent—had common sense or even common decency been his guide—he might have made a fortune, and be living at this day in his own house at South Kensington, six storeys high, and with a belvedere at one end, like the Eddystone lighthouse. His wife might have had a box at the opera in lieu of that sad witness-box at the Divorce Court; and his sons might be enjoying a college education instead of being (as I know is the case with Tom) a waiter at a chop-house in Pope's-Head-alley, or suffering every kind of hardship and privation (which I am afraid is Phil's mournful lot) as cabin-boy to that well-known disciplinarian, Captain Roper, of the ship Anne and Sarah Cobbum of Great Grimsby. This misguided Dunks might have become rich, respected, and a member of the Metropolitan Board of Works. Instead of this—flying in the face of his reason and experience, of which he should have had a fair share, seeing that he weighed nearly seventeen stone—he went and built Wretchedville. And then, forsooth, the man wondered that he was Ruined.

The ground, to begin with, was the very worst in the whole county. It was an ugly, polygonal plot, shelving down from the higher road that leads from Sobbington to Doleful-hill: a clay soil, of course, but in very bad repute for the making of bricks. Indeed the clay did not seem to be fit for anything,

save to stick to the boot-soles of people who were incautious enough to walk over it. When any rain fell, it remained here for about seven days after the adjoining ground had dried up. Then the clay resolved itself into a solution of a dark-red colour, and the spot assumed the aspect of a field of gore. When it was not clayey, it was marshy; and the neighbours had long since christened the place 'Ague Hole.' Dunks in his frenzy, and with the Vale of Health at Hampstead in his eye, wanted to call it 'Pleasant Hollow;' but the ground landlord, or rather landlady, Miss Goole (she went melancholy mad, left half her fortune to the Doleful-hill Asylum, and the will is still the subject of a nice little litigation in Chancery) —Miss Goole, I say, who granted Dunks his building lease, insisted that the group of tenements he intended to erect should be called Wretchedville. Her aunt had been a Miss Wretched, of Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

And Wretchedville the place remains to this day. Dunks did his best, or rather his worst with it. He proposed to drain the ground; the result of which was, that water made its appearance in places where it had not appeared before. He laid out a declivitous road branching downwards from the highway, and leading nowhere save to the reservoir of the West Howlington Gasworks; and a nice terminus to the vista did this monstrous iron tub make. He spent all his own money, and as much of other people's as he could possibly borrow, on Wretchedville, and

then, as I have hinted, Bacchus and he became inseparable companions, and he continued to 'wreathe the rosy bowl' and 'quaff the maddening wine-cup,' the two ordinarily assuming the guise of rum-and-water, cold, till he woke up one morning in the Messenger's Office in Basinghall-street, waiting for his protection. Swamper, the great buyer-up of carcasses, was a secured creditor, and came into possession of Wretchedville; but Swamper is the world-known contractor, whose dealings with the Bucharest Improvements, and the Herzegovina Baths and Wash-houses Company, have been made lately the subject of such lively public comment. He is generally oscillating between his offices in Great George-street Westminster and the Danubian provinces, and has had little time to attend to Wretchedville. He has been heard to express an opinion that the place—the confounded hole he calls it—will 'turn up trumps' some day; and, indeed, plans for a new county prison, on a remarkably eligible site between Doleful-hill and Sobbington, have been hanging up for some time, neatly framed and glazed, in his office. Meanwhile the Wretchedville rents are receivable by Messrs. Flimsy and Quinsy, auctioneers, valuers, and estate agents, of Chancery-lane; and Swamper's affairs being, as I am given to understand, in somewhat evil trim, it is not unlikely that Wretchedville, ere long, will fall into fresh hands. And I don't envy the man into whose hands it falls.

How I came to be acquainted with Wretchedville

was in this wise. I was in quest, last autumn, of a nice quiet place, within a convenient distance of town, where I could finish an epic poem,—or, stay, was it a five-act drama?—on which I had been long engaged, and where I could be secure from the annoyance of organ-grinders, and of reverend gentlemen leaving little subscription-books one day, and calling for them the next—I should like to know what difference there is between them and the people who leave the packets of steel pens, and the patent lamp-globe protector, and Bullinger's History of the Inquisition, under the special patronage of the Archbishop of Tobago, to be continued in monthly parts—together with the people who want your autograph, and others who want money, and things of that kind. I pined for a place where one could be very snug, and where one's friends didn't drop in 'just to look you up, old fellow;' and where the post didn't come in too often. So I packed up a bag of needments, and availing myself of a mid-day train, on the Great Domdaniel Railway, alighted haphazard at a station.

It turned out to be Sobbington. I saw at a glance that Sobbington was too fashionable, not to say stuck-up, for me. The Waltz from Faust was pianofortetically audible from at least half-a-dozen semi-detached windows; and this, combined with some painful variations on 'Take, then, the Sabre,' and a cursory glance into a stationer's shop and fancy warehouse, where two stern mammas, of low-church aspect, were purchasing the back numbers of

the New Pugwell-square Pulpit, and three young ladies were telegraphically inquiring, behind their parent's backs, of the young person at the counter, whether any letters had been left for them, sufficed to accelerate my departure from Sobbington. The next station on the road, I was told, was Doleful-hill, and then came Deadwood Junction. I thought I would take a little walk, and see what the open and what the covert yielded. I left my bag with a moody porter at the Sobbington station, and trudged along the road which had been indicated to me as leading to Doleful-hill. It happened to be a very splendid afternoon. There were patches of golden and of purple gorse skirting those parts of the road in which the semi-detached villa eruption had not yet broken out; the distant hills were delicately blue, and the mellow sun was distilling his rays into diamonds and rubies on the roof of a wondrous Palace of Glass, which does duty in these parts, as Vesuvius does duty in Naples, as a Pervading Presence. At Portici and at Torre del Greco, at Sobbington or at Doleful-hill, turn whithersoever you will, the Mountain seems close upon you always.

It is true that I was a little dashed, when I encountered an organ-grinder lugubriously winding 'Slap bang, here we are again!' off his brazen reel, and looking anything but a jolly dog. Organ-grinding was contrary to the code I had laid down to govern my retirement. But the autumnal sun shone very genially on this child of the sunny South—who

had possibly come from the bleakest part of Piedmont—his smile was of the sunniest likewise, and there was a roguish twinkle in his black eyes, and though his cheeks were brown, his teeth were of the whitest. So, as I gave him pence, I determined inwardly, that I would tolerate at least one organ-grinder, if he came near where I lived. It is true that I had not the remotest idea of where I was going to live.

I walked onwards and onwards, admiring the pied cows in the far-off pastures—cows, the white specks on whose hides occurred so artistically, that one might have thought that the scenic arrangement of the landscape had been intrusted to Mr. Birket Foster.

Anon I saw coming towards me a butcher-boy in his cart, drawn by a fast-trotting pony. It was a light high spring-cart, very natty and shiny, with the names and addresses of the proprietors, Messrs. Hock, butchers to the royal family, West Deadwood—which of the princes or princesses resided at West Deadwood, I wonder?—emblazoned on the panels. The butcher-boy shone, too, with a suety sheen. The joints which formed his cargo were of the hue of which an English girl's cheeks should be—pure red and white. And the good sun shone upon all. The equipage came rattling along at a high trot, the butcher squaring his arms and whistling—I could *see* him whistle from afar off. I asked him when he neared me, how far it might be to Doleful-hill.

'Good two mile,' quoth the butcher-boy, pulling up. 'Steady, you warmint!' This was to the trotting pony. 'But,' he continued,' 'you'll have to pass Wretchedville first. 'Lays in a 'ole a little to the left, arf a mile on.'

'Wretchedville,' thought I; what an odd name! 'What sort of a place is it?' I inquired.

'Well,' replied the butcher-boy; 'it's a lively place, a werry lively place. I should say it was lively enough to make a cricket burst himself for spite: it's so uncommon lively.' And with this enigmatical deliverance the butcher-boy relapsed into a whistle of the utmost shrillness, and rattled away towards Sobbington.

I wish that it had not been quite so golden an afternoon. A little dulness, a few clouds in the sky, might have acted as a caveat against Wretchedville. But I plodded on and on, finding all things looking beautiful in that autumn glow. I came positively on a gipsy encampment; blanket tent; donkey tethered to a cart-wheel; brown man in a wideawake, hammering at a tin pot; brown woman with a yellow kerchief, sitting crossed-legged, mending brown man's pantaloons; brown little brats of Egypt swarming across the road, and holding out their burnt-sienna hands for largesse, and the regular gipsy's kettle swinging from the crossed sticks over a fire of stolen furze. Farmer Somebody's poultry simmering in the pot, no doubt. Family linen—somebody else's linen yesterday—drying on an adjacent bush. Who says

that the picturesque is dead? The days of Sir Roger de Coverley had come again. So I went on and on admiring, and down the declivitous road into Wretchedville, and to Destruction.

Were there any apartments 'to let'? Of course there were. The very first house I came to was, as regards the parlour-window, nearly blocked up by a placard treating of Apartments Furnished. Am I right in describing it as the parlour-window? I scarcely know; for the front door, with which it was on a level, was approached by such a very steep flight of steps, that when you stood on the topmost grade it seemed as though, with a very slight effort, you could have peeped in at the bedroom window, or touched one of the chimney-pots; while as concerns the basement, the front kitchen—I beg pardon, the breakfast parlour—appeared to be a good way above the level of the street. The space in the first-floor window not occupied by the placard, was filled by a monstrous group of wax fruit, the lemons as big as pumpkins, and the leaves of an unnaturally vivid green. The window below—it was a single-windowed front—served merely as a frame for the half-length portrait of a lady in a cap, ringlets, and a colossal cameo brooch. The Eyes of this portrait were fixed upon me; and before, almost, I had lifted a very small, light knocker, decorated, so far as I could make out, with the cast-iron effigy of a desponding ape, and had struck this against a door which, to judge from the amount of percussion produced, was composed of bristol-board

highly varnished, the portal itself flew open, and the portrait of the basement appeared in the flesh. Indeed, it was the same portrait. Downstairs it had been Mrs. Primpris looking out into the Wretchedville road for lodgers. Upstairs it was Mrs. Primpris letting her lodgings, and glorying in the act.

She didn't ask for any references. She didn't hasten to inform me that there were no children, or any other lodgers. She didn't look doubtful, when I told her that the whole of my luggage consisted of a black bag, which I had left at the Sobbington station. She seemed rather pleased than otherwise at the idea of the bag, and said that her Alfred should step round for it. She didn't object to smoking; and she at once invested me with the Order of the Latch-key—a latch-key at Wretchedville, ha! ha! She farther held me with her glittering eye, and I listened like a two-years child, while she let me the lodgings for a fortnight certain. Perhaps it was less her eye that dazed me than her cameo, on which there was, in high relief, and on a ground of the hue of a pig's liver, the effigy of a young woman with a straight nose and a round chin, and a quantity of snakes in her hair. I don't think that cameo came from Rome. I think it came from Tottenham-court-road.

She had converted me into a single gentleman lodger, of quiet and retired habits—or was I a widower of independent means seeking a home in a cheerful family?—so suddenly, that I beheld all things as in a dream. Thinking, perchance, that the

first stone of that monumental edifice, the Bill, could not be laid too quickly, she immediately provided me with Tea. There was a little cottage-loaf, so hard, round, shiny, and compact, that I experienced a well-nigh uncontrollable desire to fling it up to the ceiling, to ascertain whether it would chip off any portion of a preposterous rosette in stucco in the centre, representing a sunflower, surrounded by cabbage-leaves. This terrible ornament was, by the way, one of the chief sources of my misery at Wretchedville. I was continually apprehensive that it would tumble down bodily on to the table. In addition to the cottage-loaf, there was a pretentious teapot, which, had it been of sterling silver, would have been worth fifty guineas, but which, in its ghastly gleaming, said plainly 'Sheffield' and 'imposture.' There was a piece of butter in a 'shape,' like a diminutive haystack, and with a cow sprawling on the top in unctuous plasticity. It was a pallid kind of butter, from which with difficulty you shaved off adipocerous scales, which would not be persuaded to adhere to the bread, but flew off at tangents, and went rolling about an intolerably large teatray, on whose papier-mâché surface was depicted the death of Captain Hedley Vicars. The Crimean sky was inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and the gallant captain's face was highly enriched with blue-and-crimson foil-paper. As for the tea, I don't think I ever tasted such a peculiar mixture. Did you ever sip warm catsup sweetened with borax? *That* might have been something like it. And what was that sediment, strongly resembling the sand

at Great Yarmouth, at the bottom of the cup? I sat down to my meal, however, and made as much play with the cottage-loaf as I could. Had the loaf been varnished? It smelt and looked as though it had undergone that process. Everything in the house smelt of varnish. I was uncomfortably conscious, too, during my repast—one side of the room being all window—that I was performing the part of a 'Portrait of the Gentleman in the first floor,' and that as such I was 'sitting' to Mrs. Lucknow at Number Twelve, opposite—I know her name was Lucknow, for a brass plate on the door said so—whose own half-length effigy was visible in her breakfast-parlour window, glowering at me reproachfully because I had not taken her first floor, in the window of which was, not a group of wax fruit, but a sham alabaster vase full of artificial flowers. Every window in Wretchedville exhibited one or other of these ornaments, and it was from their contemplation that I began to understand, how it was that the 'fancy-goods' trade in the Minories and Houndsditch throve so well. They made things there to be purchased by the housekeepers of Wretchedville. The presence of Mrs. Lucknow at the glass case over the way was becoming unbearable, when the unpleasant vision was shut out by the appearance of Mrs. Primpris's Alfred, who, with his sister Selina, had been sent to Sobbington for my bag. Alfred was a boy with a taste for art. In the daytime he was continually copying the head of a Greek person (sex uncertain) in a helmet, who

reminded you equally of a hairdresser's dummy in plaster, and of a fireman of the Fire Brigade. He used to bring studies of this person, in white, red, and black chalk, to me, and expect that I would reward him for his proficiency with threepenny-pieces 'to buy india-rubber;' and then Mrs. Primpris would be sure to be lurking outside the door, and audibly expressing her wish that some good, kind, gentleman would get Alfred into the Blue-Coat School, which she appeared to look upon as a kind of eleemosynary institution in connection with the Royal Academy of Arts. I can't help suspecting, from sundry private conversations I had with Alfred, that he entertained a profound detestation for the plaster person in the helmet, and for the Fine Arts generally; but, as he logically observed, he was 'kep at it,' and 'it was no use hollerin'.' As for his sister Selina, all I can remember of her is that one leg of her tucked calico trousers was always two inches and a half longer than the other, and that for a girl of thirteen she had the most alarmingly sharp shoulder-blades I ever saw. I always used to think when I saw these osseous angularities, oscillating like the beams of a marine engine, that the next time her piston-rod-like arms moved, the scapulæ must come through her frock. Mrs. Primpris was a disciplinarian; and whenever I heard Selina plaintively yelping in the kitchen, I felt tolerably certain that Mrs. Primpris was correcting her on her shoulder-blades with a shoe.

The shades of evening fell, and Mrs. Primpris

brought me in a monstrous paraffin lamp, the flame of which wouldn't do anything but lick the glass chimney, till it had smoked it to the hue proper to observe eclipses by, and then splutter into extinction, emitting a charnel-house-like odour. After that we tried a couple of composites (six to the pound) in green-glass candlesticks. I asked Mrs. Primpris if she could send me up a book to read; and she favoured me, *per* Alfred and Selina, with her whole library, consisting of the Asylum Press Almanac for 1860, two odd volumes of the Calcutta Directory; the Brewer and Distiller's Assistant; Julia de Crespigny, or a Winter in London; Dunoyer's French Idioms; and the Reverend Mr. Huntington's Bank of Faith. I took out my cigar-case after this, and began to smoke; and then I heard Mrs. Primpris coughing, and a number of doors being thrown wide open. Upon this I concluded that I would go to bed. My sleeping apartment—the first floor back—was a perfect cube. One side was window, overlooking a strip of clay soil hemmed in between brick walls. There were no tombstones yet, but if it wasn't a cemetery, why, when I opened the window to get rid of the odour of the varnish, did it smell like one? The opposite side of the cube was composed of a chest of drawers. I am not impertinently curious by nature, but, as I was the first-floor lodger, I thought myself entitled to open the top long drawer, with a view to the bestowal therein of the contents of my black bag. The drawer was not empty; but that which it held made me very nervous.

I suppose the weird figure I saw stretched out there, with pink arms and legs sprouting from a shroud of silver paper, a quantity of ghastly auburn curls, and two blue glass eyes unnaturally gleaming in the midst of a mask of salmon-coloured wax, was Selina's best doll; the present, perhaps, of her uncle, who was, haply, a Calcutta director, or an Asylum Press Almanac maker, or a brewer and distiller, or a cashier in the Bank of Faith. I shut the drawer again hurriedly, and that doll in its silver paper cerecloth haunted me all night.

The third side of my bedroom consisted of chimney—the coldest, hardest, brightest-looking fireplace I ever saw out of Hampton Court Palace guard-room. The fourth side was door. I forget into which corner was hitched a washhand stand. The ceiling was mainly stucco rosette, of the pattern of the one in my sitting-room. Among the crazes which came over me at this time was one, to the effect that this bedroom was a cabin on board ship, and that if the ship should happen to lurch, or roll in the trough of the sea, I must infallibly tumble out of the door, or the window, or into the drawer where the doll was —unless the drawer and the doll came out to me —or up the chimney. I think that I murmured 'Steady,' as I clomb into bed. My couch—an 'Arabian' one Mrs. Primpris said proudly—seemingly consisted of the Logan, or celebrated rocking-stone of Cornwall, loosely covered with bleached canvas, under which was certain loose foreign matter, but

whether composed of flocculi of wool, or of the halves of kidney potatoes I am not in a position to state. At all events I awoke in the morning veined all over like a scagliola column. I never knew, too, before, that any blankets were ever manufactured in Yorkshire, or elsewhere, so remarkably small and thin as the two seeming flannel pocket-handkerchiefs with blue-and-crimson edging, which formed part of Mrs. Primpris's Arabian bed-furniture. Nor had I hitherto been aware, as I was when I lay with that window at my feet, that the Moon was so very large. The orb of night seemed to tumble on me, flat, until I felt as though I were lying in a cold frying-pan. It was a 'watery moon,' I have reason to think; for when I awoke the next morning, much battered with visionary conflicts with the doll, I found that it was raining cats and dogs.

'The rain,' the poet tells us, 'it raineth every day.' It rained most prosaically all that day at Wretchedville, and the next, and from Monday morning till Saturday night, and then until the middle of the next week. Dear me! dear me! how wretched I was! I hasten to declare that I have no kind of complaint to make against Mrs. Primpris. Not a flea was felt in her house. The cleanliness of the villa was so scrupulous as to be distressing. It smelt of soap and scrubbing-brush, like a Refuge. Mrs. Primpris was strictly honest, even to the extent of inquiring what I would like to have done with the fat of cold mutton-chops, and sending me up antediluvian

crusts, the remnants of last week's cottage-loaves, with which I would play moodily at knock-'em-downs, using the pepper-caster as a pin. I have nothing to say against Alfred's fondness for art. India-rubber, to be sure, is apter to smear than to obliterate drawings in chalk; but a threepenny piece is not much; and you cannot too early encourage the imitative faculties. And again, if Selina did require correction, I am not prepared to deny that a shoe may be the best implement, and the bladebones the most fitting portion of the human anatomy, for such an exercitation. I merely say that I was wretched at Wretchedville, and that Mrs. Primpris's apartments very much aggravated my misery. The usual objections taken to a lodging-house are to the effect that the furniture is dingy, the cooking execrable, the servant a slattern, and the landlady either a crocodile or a tigress. Now my indictment against my Wretchedville apartments simply amounts to this: that everything was too new. Never were there such staring paper-hangings, such gaudily-printed druggets for carpets, such blazing hearthrugs—one representing the Dog of Montargis seizing the murderer of the Forest of Bondy—such gleaming fire-irons, and such remarkably shiny looking-glasses, with gilt halters for frames. The crockery was new, and the glue in the chairs and tables was scarcely dry. The new veneer peeled off the new chiffonier. The roller-blinds to the windows were so new that they wouldn't work. The new stair-carpeting used to

dazzle my eyes so, that I was always tripping myself up; the new oil-cloth in the hall smelt like the Trinity House repository for new buoys; and Mrs. Primpris was always full-dressed, cameo brooch and all, by nine o'clock in the morning. She confessed, once or twice during my stay, that her house was not quite 'seasoned.' It was not even seasoned to sound. Every time the kitchen-fire was poked, you heard the sound in the sitting-room. As to perfumes, whenever the lid of the copper in the wash-house was raised, the first-floor lodger was aware of the fact. I knew, by the simple evidence of my olfactory organs, what Mrs. Primpris had for dinner every day. Pork, accompanied by some green esculent, boiled, predominated.

When my fortnight's tenancy had expired—I never went outside the house until I left it for good—and my epic poem, or whatever it was, had more or less been completed, I returned to London, and had a rare bilious attack. The doctor said it was Painter's Colic; I said at the time that it was disappointed ambition, for the booksellers had looked very coldly on my poetical proposals; and the managers, to a man, had refused to read my play; but at this present writing, I believe the sole cause of my malady to have been Wretchedville. I hope they will pull down the villas, and build the jail there, soon, and that the rascal convicts will be as wretched as I was.

THE HOTEL CHAOS.

To say that Chaos is come again is a tolerably common locution for expressing an excessive amount of confusion; but there need not be the slightest fear of the return of the Hotel Chaos. It can *never* come again. It was too rich of its kind, too peculiar, too overwhelming in its characteristics, to bear repetition. Among chaotic things it was unique, and, on the whole, it may be esteemed a matter for congratulation that there never could have been by any possibility but one Hotel Chaos, and that in all human probability there never will be another. There are limits even to disorder, and the acutest ravings of mania must have their turn. The Hotel Chaos was the maddest hostelry ever known, or ever dreamt of. It did its work; it reached its consummation; it Burst; and it can be no more restored to its pristine shape than can one of those paper bags which schoolboys inflate with their breath until the bags are as plump as a balloon ready to start, and then, with smart concussion from the palms of their hands, rend into irremediable fragments.

I never enjoyed the felicity of a bed at the Hotel Chaos: which, to have been consistent, should have

been fitted up, in the way of sleeping accommodation, with padded rooms, frequented by laundresses bringing home nothing but strait-waistcoats as clean linen from the wash. A room at the Hotel Chaos! Bless you, such a thing was an infinity of cuts above me, and was meat for my masters—marshals of France, grand provosts, and similar grandees. I don't think they took in anybody lower in rank than a deputy-assistant commissary-general, and it is not probable that I shall ever attain a grade so exalted. There had been, to be sure, a few modest civilians, despicable creatures, with not so much as a solitary ribbon of the Legion of Honour among them, who had been fortunate enough to obtain apartments at the Chaos, before the hotel went hopelessly and stark-staringly mad; and as these contemptible creatures (who were mainly Englishmen) were content to pay about seventy-five per cent more for their board and lodging than the grandees were willing to disburse, the landlord—a covetous rogue with but scant patriotism in him—was naturally reluctant to turn these ignoble, but lucrative, customers into the street. Ere long, however, a dashing member of the staff of Field-Marshal Bombastes Furioso was heard to ask the proprietor how long it would be before he put 'tout ce tas de pékins à la porte'—before he expelled all those cads of civilians; and so shortly afterwards the proprietor —really much against the grain, I am willing to believe—began to grow insolent to the civilian cads, and to hint that their rooms were required for 'Mes-

sieurs les Militaires;' that General Fusbos couldn't wait any longer, that Colonel Grosventre must really be accommodated, and that Milord Smith, Count Thompson, and Sir Brown must find lodgings elsewhere. Smith, Brown, and Thompson, quiet souls, well aware that in war time the toga must cede to the tunic, meekly withdrew from the foul and wretched garrets where for sums varying from ten to fifteen francs a day they had been suffered to hide their degraded heads; but, although ostracised from the upper rooms, they were by no means free, financially, from the exaction of the Hotel Chaos. It was one of the myriad humours of this bedlamite establishment that your bill, if you didn't stop in the house, had a tendency to grow longer than had been its custom when you did stop. But how was a bill possible at all, you may ask. Thus. The Hotel Chaos was the only place in the maniacal city of Moriah where you could get a decent breakfast or dinner, and where tolerable coffee, liquors, and cigars could be obtained. Moreover, as the chief madmen of Moriah were always congregated at the Chaos, and as, in its salle à manger and its court-yard, all that was notable and worth studying in the way of hallucination, foaming at the mouth, homicidal mania, epilepsy, demoniacal possession, hysteria, melancholia, kleptomania, hypochondriasis, dipsomania, and midsummer madness, was sure to be visible and audible at all hours of the day and night; as, within its walls, there was a perpetual narration of tales told by idiots, full of sound

and fury, signifying nothing; of visions so wild and fantastic, that Ossian read tamely, and Emmanuel Swedenborg flatly afterwards; and of lies so grandiose and so impudent that Marco Polo or Sir John Mandeville might have sickened with envy to hear them—you were perforce impelled to make of the Hotel Chaos a common news-room, exchange, and lounge. You breakfasted and dined at the table-d'hôte; you smoked and took your demi-tasse, or your seltzer-and-something, on the terrace overlooking the court-yard—shaking sometimes in your shoes, miserable civilian cads as you were, at the knowledge of the close propinquity of Marshal Bombastes and General Fusbos, and sometimes of a plumed and embroidered aide-de-camp of the great Emperor Artaxomines himself. Thus, you 'used' the Hotel Chaos, although you had no bed there, and you were always heavily in debt to the waiter. If you wanted to pay him for your dinner, he had no change; and when you had no change—and nothing to change, perchance, for ready money was apt to run wofully short in the mad city of Moriah—he was sure to present a bill exhibiting a fabulous back score of breakfasts, dinners, demi-tasses, and petits verres, and impetuously demanded payment. If you demurred, he threatened you with the grand provost. He knew you to be a miserable cad of a civilian, only fed upon sufferance, incessantly watched and followed about by the gendarmerie and by police-agents in plain clothes, and he also knew that the propriety of your

expulsion altogether from Moriah was debated every day by some of the grandees in cocked hats and epaulettes. The best thing to do was to conciliate the waiter with humble and obsequious phrases, and, giving him silver money for himself, promise to pay the bill—usually a mere schedule of fictitious items—that afternoon. Under those circumstances you were tolerably safe; for in five minutes the head-waiter usually forgot all about you. He had dunned somebody else successfully, or the still small voice of conscience had deterred him from making another attempt to fleece you; or—which is the likeliest hypothesis of all—his intermittent fit of madness had come on, and he had gone up-stairs to tear his hair, and claw his flesh, and gnaw the bedclothes, and howl till he was hoarse, according to the afternoon custom of the men of Moriah.

Moriah, I may take occasion to observe, lest I should get benighted in the maze of allegory, was, in sane parlance, the fortified city of Metz, the headquarters, at the end of the month of July 1870, of the Army of the Rhine, of the Imperial Guard of France, and of the Emperor Napoleon the Third, who, with his young son, the Prince Imperial, his cousin, Prince Napoleon, a brilliant staff, and a sumptuous following, were lodged at the Hotel of the Prefecture. Marshals Le Bœuf and Bazaine, General de Saint Sauveur (the grand provost), General Soleil, commanding the artillery of the Guards, and a glittering mob of generals, colonels, and aides-de-camp of

the Guards, the staff, and the line, were at the Hotel Chaos.

But, be it borne in mind that, when I speak of the Chaotic Inn, my statement must be taken with a slight reservation or allowance. You may be horror-stricken at the confession that there were two Hotels Chaos in Metz, and that, to this day, I cannot remember with exactitude which was which. They were in the same street, the Grande Rue Colneyhatchi, I think, exactly opposite one another: each with a court-yard, each with a terrace, each with head-waiters, who presented you with extortionate bills, each full of marshals, generals, colonels, and aides-de-camp: in fact, as like unto one another as two peas, or the two Dromios, or Hippocrates' Twins. One, I am inclined to think —but Reason totters on her throne—was called the Grand Hôtel de Metz. The other—but my brain burns with volcanic fierceness when I strive to recall it—was known as the Grand Hôtel de l'Europe. It is my firm conviction that, for the major portion of the edibles and potables I consumed at the Grand Hôtel de Metz, I paid the waiter at the Grand Hôtel de l'Europe, and vice versâ. It did not matter much, then, for there was a solidarity of insanity between them, and both were integral parts—if any integrity could be in that which was normally and essentially disintegration—of the Hotel Chaos. It matters less now; since, for aught we know, both hotels have been burnt to the ground, or shattered by bomb-shells, and nothing remains within the huge earth-

works of Metz but charred beams and crumbling brickwork, and dust and ashes. Perhaps the head-waiters at the two caravansaries—I have heard that a fierce mutual hatred existed between them—have eaten one another.

Let me strive to embody some fleeting memories of that demented time. There is breakfast. We that were English in Metz, a feeble folk, continuously snubbed by the military authorities, and harassed by the police, and pursuing an arduous vocation under all manner of slights, discouragement, and obstacles, usually made a rendezvous to breakfast together at the same time—about half-past ten. There was canny Mr. M'Inkhorn, from the Land o' Cakes, special correspondent of the 'Bannockburn Journal and Peck o' Maut Advertiser,' who, in the performance of his duties as a war-scribe, was chronically perturbed in mind by the thought that he had left unfinished in North Britain a series of statistical articles on the Sanitary Condition of Glen M'Whisky. There was Mr. Mercutio, once gallant and gay, now elderly and portly, who was called Philosopher Mercutio in early life, and wrote that celebrated work on the Rationale of the Categorical Imperative as correlative to the Everlasting Affirmation of Negation, and who now laughed, and gossiped, and drank kirschwasser all day long, and wrote war-letters to a High Tory evening paper all night. He had brought his son with him, an ingenuous youth, in a gray tweed suit, who was his sire's guide, philosopher, and friend; con-

trolled him gently in the matter of kirschwasser, was the profoundest cynic and the shrewdest observer for his age I ever met with, and who otherwise, from sunrise to sunset, did nothing with an assiduity which was perfectly astonishing. There was mild-eyed Mr. Sumph, of Balliol, who indited those fiery letters from Abyssinia during the campaign, and had a special faculty while in Metz for getting arrested as a Prussian spy. There were a brace of quiet, harmless, industrious artists belonging to English illustrated newspapers, pilgrims of the pencil, who had wandered, in discharge of their functions, to the Crimea, to Italy, to India, to China, to the Isthmus of Suez, and to the banks of the Chickahominy, and who were now, in fear and trembling, making notes in their sketch-books of the most salient madnesses of Metz susceptible of pictorial treatment. And especially there was Mr. O'Goggerdan of the 'Avalanche,' a small man, but of a most heroic stomach, and of venturesomeness astounding. He had been, they said, a colonel of American Federal cavalry, a Confederate bushwhacker, a Mexican guerillero, a Spanish contrabandista, a Garibaldino, one of the Milia di Marsala of course, a Fenian centre, and a Pontifical Zouave. He was Dugald Dalgetty combined with Luca Fa Presto; doubling the rapier of the practised swordsman with the pen of the ready-writer. A wind blowing from Fleet-street, London, had brought these strangely-assorted people together: the philosopher the elder, the Oxford fellow, the painter, the soldier of fortune, were

all bent on achieving the same task, and were all occasionally partakers of that misery which makes us acquainted with such very strange bedfellows.

When the customary salutations of the morning were over, when we had inquired whether any of our number had been arrested as spies during the preceding evening, and when we had striven to ascertain whether there were any news from the front—it was just after Saarbrück—and when we had, as usual, been baffled in our attempt, we fell to discussing a very substantial breakfast à la fourchette, to which dropped in, between eleven and noon, group after group of artists in the great drama, of which the first scene had, as yet, been but ill played. It is possible that I may be rather understating than overstating the fact, when I assume that three-fourths of the French people we used to meet every morning at breakfast, and who, as a rule, treated us with infinite scorn and contumely—it is true that as civilian cads we had no business there, and should have been hiding our heads in squalid auberges suited to our degree—are by this time dead and buried, or scattered to the four winds of heaven; in exile, in captivity, or in other ruinous and irremediable dispersion.* Of the mere bald aspects and trite humours of a French garrison town, with which most of us who have made even a week's trip to the Continent must be familiar, I should be ashamed to treat; and Metz in ordinary times had been, I doubt it not, as dull and trite a

* This paper was written in November 1870.

place as its hundred and one congeners among French garrisons. A great deal of drumming and a great deal of bugling; much swaggering about streets and leering under feminine bonnets on the part of portly captains and wasp-waisted lieutenants, and of shiftlessly dawdling and futile pavement beating on the part of gaby-faced soldiers, not over clean, and with an inch and a half of coarse cotton shirt visible between the hem of their undress jackets and the waistband of their red pantaloons; much moustache twisting, tin-canful of soup carrying, absinthe tippling, and halfpenny cigar smoking: these were the most salient features of French military life, and they were as well known to the majority of educated Englishmen as the manners and customs of the metropolitan police. But when Metz went mad with the war fever early in August 1870, her military guise underwent a development so extensive and so exceptional, that the spectator of many strange scenes in many strange countries may be warranted in sketching the things he saw without being open to the charge of telling a thrice-told tale. To our breakfast-table at the Hotel Chaos came officers—few of them below the rank of captain—from every branch of the French military service. The Imperial Guard were the most numerously represented; for at Metz were the imperial head-quarters, and the Cent Gardes mounted sentry at the Prefecture. Their lieutenant did not condescend to breakfast with us; but he frequently deigned to take coffee and kirsch on the terrace. I see him

now, a sky-blue giant—I mean that his tunic was sky-blue—with a fat, foolish face. For the rest he was all epaulettes, and jack-boots, and buckskins, and aiguillettes, and buttons, and sword and sash, and splendour generally. I used to reckon him up, and calculate that at the lowest valuation he could not be bought, as he stood, for less than a hundred and fifty pounds. His boots alone must have been worth three pounds ten. I used, I own, to envy him. To what surprising stroke of good luck did he owe his commission in the cream of the Prætorians; in the Golden Guard of Cæsar? Had he been born to greatness? had he achieved it? or had greatness been thrust upon him in consequence of his breadth of chest and length of limb? What a position! Here was a fortunate youth, obviously not more than five-and-twenty years of age, who was privileged to mount guard on Cæsar's staircase, and before the curtains of the alcoves of the empress. He had been at all the grand Tuileries balls, at the state ceremonies in the Great Hall of the Louvre, at the imperial hunts at Fontainebleau and Compiegne. The faces of half the kings in Europe must have been familiar to him; and as for princes, princesses, senators, members of the Institute and Grands Croix of the Legion of Honour, they must have been to his sated vision the smallest of small deer. Yet here was this ambrosial creature—this happy combination of the Apollo Belvedere and Shaw the Life Guardsman—for I am sure that he was as brave as he was beautiful—sipping his coffee and kirsch,

and smoking his cigar, as though he had been an ordinary mortal. And—no; my olfactory nerves did not deceive me: the cigar was a halfpenny one, a veritable Petit Bordeaux of the Régie. What has become of that gay and gallant Colossus by this time? It is some satisfaction to have the conviction that his corpse is not entombed in some dreadful trench in the blood-drenched fields of Alsace or Lorraine, for the Cent Gardes did not fight. After Sedan, the corps being abolished by a hard-hearted republican government, these sumptuous but expensive Janisaries retired into private life. By the way, what became of the real Turkish Janisaries? They were not all massacred by the Sultan Mahmoud; some few escaped. What became of those Mamelukes who were not cut to pieces by the troops of Mehemet Ali? What would become of our Beefeaters, if a cruel House of Commons declined to vote the miscellaneous estimate necessary for their support? What becomes of the supernumeraries when the Italian Opera-house closes—the men with the large flat faces, sphinx-like in their impassibility, the large hands, the larger feet, and the legs on which the 'tights' are always in loose wrinkles, and which are frequently bandy? There is a strange faculty of absorption and ingulfment in life. There are whole races of people who seem to 'duck under,' as it were, and remain quietly and comfortably submarine, while the great ocean overhead moans and struggles, or is lashed to frenzy in infinite surges. Some of these days, perchance, I shall meet a

marker at billiards, or a 'putter-up' in a bowling alley, an assistant at a hairdresser's, or a model in a life school, who may casually mention the fact that once upon a time he was a Cent Garde. Why not? I met a Knight of Malta in Spain, who was travelling in dry sherries; and I have heard of an ex-Dominican monk who at present follows the lively profession of clown to a circus. I have been aware of a baronet who earned his living as a photographer, and an unfrocked archdeacon who sold corn and coals on commission.

They say that in the Prussian army every commissioned officer below the rank of major is bound to perform every day, in addition to his military duties, and ere ever he can think of recreation, a given task of serious study, precisely as though he were a schoolboy. He must draw some map, plan, or elevation, solve some problem in military mathematics, make an abridgment or an analysis of a portion of some technical work, or write some 'theme' upon a given subject—say the causes of the Seven Years' War, the commissariat system of the Tenth Legion, or the amount of historical truth in the story of the battle of the Lake Regillus. To the enforcement of such an unbending course of mental as well as physical discipline the Prussian army may owe no inconsiderable portion of the success which has lately attended its operations in the field. Looking back upon the Hotel Chaos, and the huge camp of which it was the centre, I cannot help thinking

that a little daily schooling after the Prussian manner would have done the paladins of Gaul an immensity of good. An hour's history, an hour's geography, an hour's mathematics a day would have been scarcely felt by the multitude of officers who, their slight regimental duties at an end, were privileged, or rather condemned, for the remainder of the twenty-four hours, to do nothing but eat, drink, smoke, dawdle about the courtyard and the streets, and babble. Of female society, to refine or to amuse them, there was none, for the burgesses of Metz, a prudent race, so soon as ever the vanguard of the Grand Army appeared in sight, had locked up all their daughters, and seemingly sent all their pretty servant-maids home to their mothers. With a bright exception or two, the womanhood of Metz were about as engaging in aspect as Sycorax, mother of Caliban. There was a large and handsome theatre; but the company had been dispersed, and old ladies and little schoolgirls sat in the stalls and on the stage all day long scraping lint. The two billiard-tables in the place had speedily collapsed. Of one, the Third Chasseurs cut the cloth with their cues, and declining to pay for the damage, the proprietor closed the entire concern in a huff. I think some of the tables must have been let out as beds; at all events, the sound of the clicking of balls grew fainter every day, while that of babbling grew louder. It was the babbling that drove the Grand Army mad. It was the infinite babble that brought about Chaos. Of

golden silence there was none; of silvery speech little. It was the age of bronze and brass swagger and braggadocio, mouthed by copper captains and smock-faced sous-lieutenants, who, but a fortnight before, had been schoolboys at St. Cyr. It would have been better for them to be at school still. Poor lads, I see them now, with their brand-new uniforms, which they were never tired of admiring when they could get near a mirror; the fresh lace glittering on collar and cuffs; the buttons scarce freed from the tissue-paper in which they had been wrapped; the first sheen upon the sword-scabbard; the varnish hardly dry on the belts, and in their bright boyish eyes the first exultation born of independence, of the consciousness of being men—of the rapture of the coming strife. Poor lads! poor lads! I hear their loose and idle talk, their vain boastings, their complacent disparagement of the Prussians, 'mangeurs de choucroute,' forsooth, whom they were going to 'eat' without pepper or salt. One might have fancied Maffio Orsini and the rest gaily defying Donna Lucrezia at Venice. But what said that Borgia woman in the end? 'You gave me a ball at Venice; I return it by a supper at Ferrara;' and then the lugubrious chant arose, Nisi Dominus ædificat Domum, and the seven monks with the seven coffins appeared in the doorway of the brilliant banqueting-chamber. The answer to the defiance at Metz was at Wissembourg, at Woerth, and in the bloody shambles below Sedan. When I think upon these

lads now, it is as though I had been down to a charnel-house, and lived among corpses; and were I to meet one of the babblers of the Hotel Chaos in the street, I should take him for a ghost.

Babbling, continual babbling, made the warriors dry; and it is not libellous, I trust, to hint that the army at Metz, ere the first tidings of discomfiture came, had grown to be—for Frenchmen, who in old times had a repute for temperance—a drunken army. Absinthe, kirsch, and cognac tippling went on all day and nearly all night at the Chaos, and the dissipation engendered by sheer idleness among the officers was not slow to spread among the rank and file, who, in their cups, not only babbled, but brawled. For the rest, there was Chaos outside as well as inside the hotels. The tradespeople of the town were doing a roaring business. Wholesale traders could sell as much meat, flower, wine, and forage to the government as ever they could supply; and retail vendors could scarcely keep pace with the demand for flannel shirts, potted meats, sardines, sausages, razors, and other cutlery; railway-rugs, mattresses, canteens, pipes, cigar-cases, and other camp luxuries and campaigning comforts. The officers had all received their 'entrée en campagne'—a donation of so many hundred francs, allotted at the commencement of war—and were never tired of shopping. They bought everything, except books. The courtyard of the Chaos used to be littered with packing-cases, kegs, sacks, packages, and tin cans, the private stores of

the Grand Army. Vividly do I remember a most dashing turn-out belonging to General Soleil, of the artillery—a break, with the general's name and titles conspicuously painted on it, and which was as handsome as ever paint and varnish, wheels of a bright scarlet, electro-silvered lamps and fittings, could make it. Every afternoon the general, with a select party of epauletted and decorated friends, used to take a drive about the town in this imposing vehicle, to which were attached four splendid gray Percheron horses, with harness of untanned leather. And then, a change of head-quarters being imminent, the break took in cargo for active service. Truffled goose-liver pies from Strasbourg, andouillettes from Troyes, pigs' feet from Sainte Menehould, green chartreuse and dry curaçoa, fine champagne cognac, Huntley and Palmer's biscuits, Allsopp's pale ale—the capacity of the break had stomach for all these goodies, to say nothing of boxes of cigars in such numbers, that, as you passed the break, you caught ambrosial whiffs, reminding you equally of the cedars of Lebanon and Mr. Carrera's tobacco-shop. I wonder who ate and drank all these dainties? Prince Frederick Charles, Bismark the omnivorous, or Hans Göbbell, full private in the Uhlans?

And so they went on in their madness, growing madder every day, and doing scarcely anything, as it subsequently turned out, to put the Grand Army in real fighting trim. The noise and hubbub, the babbling and boasting of the Chaos, became at last

so intolerable, that I was fain to wander away, far from the revellers, far from the great Carnival of Insanity—down by the river banks, anywhere out of Bedlam, where there was some stillness and peace. Very often, late at night, I have crossed the bridge, and paced the broad esplanade before the Prefecture. A great silken banner floated over the roof; two voltigeurs of the guard stood sentry by the gateway. From time to time dusty couriers would gallop up to the portals. Dragoon horses were picketed to the railings; and officers and orderlies would emerge, and mount, and spur away in hottest haste. Cæsar was there, Cæsar and the chiefs of the legions. Mine eyes were wont to sweep the long lines of windows, and wonder which of the brilliantly-lit rooms could be his. That upper chamber, perhaps, where the light burned so steadily and so late. There, I thought, at least were sanity, sagacity, foresight, and a wise prescience of possible disaster. In that upper chamber was the cold, calm, long-headed, imperturbable man who, nineteen years before, on the night when he made that coup d'état which gave him an empire, had sat with his feet on the fender in his room at the Elysée, slowly puffing his cigarette, and to all the remonstrances and the objections of the timid and the half-hearted, gave for answer, 'Let my orders be executed!' Nineteen years ago! It seemed but yesterday since I had stood in the Faubourg St. Honoré, looking at the brightly illumined windows of the Elysée, and wondering which was the room of Louis

Napoleon Bonaparte. He was the same man, no doubt, now, at Metz, as in the days when he put down liberty, equality, and fraternity by means of musketry—the same cold, calm, resolute Thinker and Doer, who wanted only his 'orders executed.' I had seen him twice at the railway-station, and in the cathedral of Metz. He was not, they said, in very good health, and walked feebly. But he had always been somewhat shaky as regards the lower limbs. The mind was still of crystal, the will of iron, no doubt.

Error, delusion; and that which may be termed the deadest of sells generally! There must have been ten thousand times more Chaos, more hallucination, delusion, and delirium in that room at the Prefecture in August 1870 than at the Hotel Chaos itself. Now the Prussians have got into Metz, I may pay another visit to the mad city and the madder hotels. But I shall go in disguise, with green spectacles and a false nose; for Metz must be in a frightful state of impecuniosity by this time, and, pricked by the javelins of scarcity, the waiters may make such fearful demands on me for bygone — and fictitious — scores, that a life's earnings might not suffice to discharge the prodigious bill. They would expect me to pay the debts of the dead; and how many of the lunatics who babbled in the courtyard must be by this time cold and silent!

THE IDLE LAKE.

He who is acquainted with the Idle Lake should be thoroughly versed in the topography of mythical localities—should be familiar with the Bower of Bliss, the House of Fame, and the Cave of Despair; with Doubting Castle, Vanity Fair, and the Valley of the Shadow; with the Debatable Land and the Islands of the Blest; with Armida's Garden, and that fearfully beautiful Arbour of Proserpine, where nothing but that which was noxious grew. All these legendary regions should strengthen in the beholder the love and wonderment which, as a confirmed lotus-eater, an inveterate truant, and an incorrigible sluggard, he should feel for the Idle Lake.

It is situated—anywhere; and why not in Fairyland? Why should I not chronicle its bearings thus? Once upon a time, a certain Sir Cymochles, a mailed knight certainly, who had the privilege of the entrée at Arthur's Court on levée days, whatever the privilege of the entrée may mean, but otherwise of no very bright repute, was wandering up and down 'miscellaneously' (a common practice in Faëry), accompanied by one Atin, a person of unquestionably bad character, and in quest of another chivalrous

person, hight Sir Guyon, with the wicked intent him to kill and slay. Sir Cymochles, on this felonious errand bent, chanced to come to a river, and, moored by the bank thereof, what should he discern but a little 'gondelay,' or gondola, spick and span, shining like a new pin, and so trimly bedecked with boughs and cunningly woven arbours, that the tiny cabin at the stern looked like a floating forest. In this delightful wherry there sat a lady fair to see, gaily dressed, and with a quantity of wild flowers in her hair. She was seemingly of a frivolous and irreverent temperament, and (the legends say) sat in the gondola grinning like a Cheshire cat. When she ceased to grin, she giggled, or hummed a refrain from some idle ditty. Now Sir Cymochles was desirous of passing to the other side of the river, and he asked the giggling lady if she would give him a cast across. Said the lady tittering, 'As welcome, Sir Knight, as the flowers in May;' but she was not so ready to oblige Atin: stoutly, indeed, refusing him boat-room. Possibly she doubted his capacity to trim the boat properly; or haply she thought that he could not pay the ferry fee. So Atin was, like Lord Ullin in the ballad, 'left lamenting' on the shore, and Sir Cymochles, with the grinning lady, went on a rare cruise. Away slid the shallow ship, 'more swift than swallows skim the liquid sky;' but the behaviour of the merry mariner on the voyage was, I regret to say, most improper. She possessed a whole storehouse of droll anecdotes, and while she told them she

laughed till the tears rolled down her pretty naughty face. It is certain that she 'chaffed' Sir Cymochles, and I am very much afraid that she tickled him; but he was rather pleased than otherwise with 'her light behaviour and loose dalliance.' Her name, she said, was Phædria. The inland sea, from which the river ran, and on whose bosom the gondelay was floating, was named, she remarked, the Idle Lake.

How the pair came at last to an island, waste and void, that floated in the midst of that great lake; how the laughing lady conducted the bemused knight to a chosen plot of fertile land, 'amongst wide oases set, like a little nest;' how in that painted oasis there was 'no tree whose branches did not bravely spring, no branch on which a fine bird did not sit;' how she fed his eyes and senses with false delights; how she led him to a shady vale, and laid him down on a grassy plain; how he—O, idiotic knight!—took off his helmet, and laid his disarmed head in her lap; how she, as he sunk into slumber, lulled him with a wondrously beautiful love lay, in which she sang of 'the lily, lady of the flow'ring field,' and of 'the fleur de lys, her lovely paramour;' how, subsequently, steeping with strong narcotics the eyelids of that bamboozled knight, she left him snoring, and hied her to her gondelay again; and how eventually she, plying at the Wapping Old Stairs of Faëry, like a jolly, wicked young water-woman as she was, picked up Sir Guyon, and him inveigled to the Idle Island in that Idle Lake; and how there was a terrific

broadsword combat of two about that 'ladye debonnaire'—are not all these things written in the chronicle of the land which never was—in the *Faërie Queene* of Edmund Spenser? If you be wise, you will take the marvellous poem with you as your only travelling companion the next time you journey to the Idle Lake.

I am not habitually idle. I cannot afford it. Highly as I appreciate the delight of doing nothing, of lying in bed and being fed with a spoon, or of eating peaches from the wall with my hands in my pockets, like Thomson, I am yet constrained, as a rule, to work for a certain number of hours in the course of every day or night, in order to obtain a certain quantity of household bread. I have been wandering these many years past in a wilderness of work, not unrelieved, however, by occasional oases. I remember them all, and dwell on the remembrance of them with infinite delight; even as that stolid wretch in hodden gray, tramping the treadmill's intolerable stairs, may dwell upon that soft and happy Sybarite time he passed after he was so lucky as to find the gentleman's gold watch and chain in the gentleman's pocket, and before he was 'wanted' by the myrmidons of a justice which would take no denial, and stigmatised his treasure trove as plunder, and his lucky find as an act of larceny. A jovial time he had: all tripe and dominoes, and shag tobacco, and warm ale. It was an oasis in his desert life of walking about in search of something to steal;

and although there are poets and philosophers who maintain that the memory of happier days is a sorrow's crown of sorrow, I have always been of a contrary opinion; holding that, as hope springs eternal in the human breast, a man is seldom so miserable but that, if he has been already happy, he cherishes the aspiration of being happy again. He may be conjuring up visions of future tripe and warm ale, more succulent and more stimulating than ever: that tramping man in hodden gray.

I am mindful of an oasis in Hampshire, and of one in Surrey; of a lotus-garden (where I over-ate myself once) in an island in the Adriatic, and of a Valley of Poppies in North Africa. I know a bank in Andalusia on which I have reclined, pleasantly yawning, and drawing idle diagrams with my walking-stick in the sands of time at my feet. I know a cascade, far, far up in the mountains of Mexico, among the silver mines, the silvery plashing of whose down-come rings in the ear of my soul now, drowning the actual and prosaic lapping of the water 'coming in' at Number Nine, next door. I am braced up tight between the shafts, blinkers block my eyes, and a cruel bit chafes my mouth, while those tearing wheels behind me seem pressing on my heels, and ever and anon the smacking whip of the driver scathes my sides; but do you think I forget the paddock in which I kicked up my heels, or resting my nose on the top of the fence, calmly contemplated the hacks on the highway, bridled and bitted, pursued by wheels, and quivering

under the whipcord? Do you think that I forget the Idle Lake?

I had been to the wars when I came upon it. It was an ugly war in which I was concerned, a desultory, unsatisfactory, semi-guerilla warfare, in the Italian Tyrol. Our commander was a famous Hero, but his troops were, to use the American expression, 'a little mixed,' and I am afraid that in several of the encounters in which we were engaged we ran away. We got scarcely anything to eat, and we slept more frequently in the open air than under a roof. It was a campaign performed by snatches, and interspersed with armistices; and now and again I used to come down out of the mountains, ragged, dirty, hungry, demoralised, and 'exceeding fierce,' and journey to Milan for letters, money, and clean linen, to have a warm bath, and enjoy a little civilisation. I am afraid that the guests at the Hotel Cavour, in the capital of Lombardy, formed anything but a favourable opinion of my manners; still, if I did nearly swallow my spoon as well as my soup, and occasionally seize a mutton cutlet by the shank, and gnaw it wolfishly, where was the harm? It was so long since I had had a decent dinner; nor did I know, when I got back to the mountains, when I might get another.

It was on one of these expeditions to Milan that Eugenius Mildman and I struck up a friendship. He was as mild as his name; a beaming, pious, gushing, amiable creature, as innocent as a lamb, as brave as a lion—I marked his conduct once in a battle, from

which, with the prudence of a non-combatant camp-follower, I timeously retreated—and as affectionate as a young gazelle. I wish they would keep such exemplary Englishmen as Mildman's race in England; but the good fellows have a strange fancy for wasting their sweetness on the desert air of foreign countries; they do good at Florence, and blush to find it fame at Malaga; they act the part of the Man of Ross in Norway, and their right hand knoweth not what their left hand doeth at Smyrna; they enrich Thebes and beautify Tadmor in the Wilderness; and, with deplorable frequency, and in the prime of life, they die of low fever at Damascus. Mildman was just the kind of charitable soul to die at Damascus, universally regretted, yet with a life wasted, somehow, in good deeds, done at the wrong time, in the wrong place, for the benefit of the wrong kind of people. He was beautifully purposeless when I met him; was undecided as to whether he should publish a series of translations from the Sarmatian anthology, in aid of the Polish emigration, or raise a loan in furtherance of public (denominational) education in the republic of Guatimozin. Meanwhile he had been fighting a little with Garibaldi. I need scarcely add that he was a spiritualist and a homœopathist, and that he occasionally spoke, not in the strongest terms of censure, of the community of Oneida Creek, the Agapemone, the followers of Johanna Southcote, and the Unknown Tongues. It was a toss up, I used to warn Mildman, between La Trappe and Colney Hatch for

him. 'Do something practical,' I used to say to Mildman. 'Pay a premium to a stockbroker, and spend a year in his office. Article yourself to a sharp solicitor. Enlist in the Sappers and Miners. You have plenty of money: take chambers in St. James's, and discount bills at sixty per cent. Make a voyage to Pernambuco before the mast. Go in for the realities.' But he wouldn't; and I am afraid that he will die at Damascus, universally regretted, and that his courier will run away with his dressing-case and his circular notes.

I shall be ever grateful to Eugenius Mildman, for he made me acquainted with the Idle Lake. It was during one of my expeditions to Milan, and broiling summer weather. The Scala was closed; and at the Canobbiana (the operatic succursal to the grander theatre) the tenor had a wooden leg, the 'prima donna assoluta' was fifty-three years of age, and the 'prima ballerina' was slightly humped in the back, and was endowed with but a single eye; so, as you may imagine, the Canobbiana entertainments did not draw very crowded audiences. The garden of the usually pleasant Caffé Cova, where we dined (chiefly on macaroni and fried intestines) 'al fresco,' had become a nuisance, owing to the continual presence of noisy patriots, smoking bad 'Cavours,' and screeching about the incapacity of General de la Marmora, and the shameful tergiversation of the Emperor Napoleon the Third in the matter of the Dominio Veneto. The caricatures in the *Spirito Folletto* were wofully

stupid, and altogether Milan had become socially uninhabitable. Mildman and I determined to start on a ramble. We got to Chiavenna, and so, by Vico Soprano, to St. Moritz. Thence, hiring a little 'calescino,' a picturesque kind of one-horse chaise, we made Samaden, and for three weeks or so dodged in and out of the minor Alpine passes—the Bernina, the Tonale, and so forth—taking to mule-back when the roads were impracticable for the 'calescino,' and coming out into the Tyrol at last somewhere near Storo, where we rejoined our famous Hero and his red-shirted army. After another skirmish or so—we called them battles—there was another armistice, and back I came to Milan, but this time alone. I shook hands with Mildman, and the last I saw of him was his slender figure bestriding a mule in a mountain gorge, and in the setting sun. He was departing in quest of windmills to charge, or forlorn Dulcineas to rescue; he was bound for Damascus, or the 'ewigkeit.' What do I know about it? Farewell, excellent Quixotic man.

But I went back to Mediolanum; and for the next eight weeks I was continually running backwards and forwards to the Idle Lake. I had grown to love it. I loved even the quaint old Lombard town from which the lake derives, not its sobriquet, but its real name. There are two of the dirtiest and dearest hotels in Northern Italy in that town; yet I was fond of them both. There are as many evil smells in the town as in Cologne; yet the imperfect

drainage, and the too apparent presence of decaying animal and vegetable matter in the market-place, did not affect me. Was I not on the shore of the great, calm, blue lake, with the blue sky above, and the blue mountains in the distance, and the whole glorious landscape shot with threads of gold by the much embroidering sun? I had made the acquaintance of a Milanese banker who had a charming villa on the opposite side of the lake, say at Silva Selvaggia. He had a pretty yacht, in which many a time we made voyages on the idle expanse, voyages which reminded me of the cruise of Sir Cymochles. My host was an enthusiastic fresh-water sailor, so much so that the lake boatman used to call him, 'Il Signore della Vela.' He was perpetually splicing his main-brace, and reefing his topsail. Sail! we did nothing but sail: that is to say when we were not breakfasting, or dining, or smoking, or drinking 'asti spumante,' or dozing, or playing with a large French poodle that was rated on the books of the yacht, and I think did more work than any of the crew (one man, very like Fra Diavolo in a check shirt, and without shoes and stockings, and a boy who played the guitar), for he was incessantly racing from the bow to the stern, and barking at the passing boats. We spent at least eight hours out of the twenty-four on the water; and when there was a dead calm we lay to and went to sleep. At breakfast time the *Perseveranza*, the chief journal of Lombardy, came to hand, and our hostess would read out the telegrams

for our edification. After that we bade the *Perseveranza* go hang, and strolled down towards the yacht. I never read anything, I never wrote anything, I never thought of anything, while I was floating on the Idle Lake, save of what a capital thing it would be to be idle for ever.

In our boating excursions we frequently landed at different points on the lake, and called upon people. They were always glad to see us, and to entertain us with fruit, wine, cigars, sonatas on the pianoforte (if there were ladies present), and perfectly idle conversation. I never yet learnt the 'nice conduct of a clouded cane;' but I think that I acquired, during my sojourn on the Idle Lake, the art of twirling a fan, and of cutting paper. Had I stayed long enough I might have learned to whistle: that grand accomplishment of the perfect idler. By degrees I became conscious that my visiting acquaintance was extending among a very remarkable set of people; and that nearly everybody occupying the dainty palazzi and trim little villas nestling among the vines and oranges and olives of the Idle Lake was Somebody. It will be no violation of confidence, I hope, and no ungrateful requital of hospitality, to hint that at Bella Riviera to the north-east was situated the charming country house of Madame la Princesse Hatzoff, the consort, indeed, of the well-known General Adjutant and Grand Chamberlain to his Imperial Majesty the Tsar of All the Russias. M. le Prince resides on his extensive estates in the government of Tamboff. Some say

that he is sojourning in a yet remoter government, that of Tobolsk in Siberia, where he is occupied in mining pursuits, in the way of rolling quartz stone in the wheelbarrow to which he, as a life convict, is chained. The Princess Hatzoff passes her winters either in Paris or Florence, her springs in England, her autumns at Homburg or Baden, and her summers on the Idle Lake. She is enormously rich, although M. le Prince, during their brief wedded life, did his best to squander the splendid fortune she brought him. She is growing old now; her clustering ringlets—she was renowned for her ringlets—are silvery white; her shoulders are arched, and her hands tremble ominously as she holds her cards at piquet; but her complexion is still exquisitely clear, and she is not indebted to art for the roses on her cheeks. Her feet are deliciously small and shapely, and she is fond of exhibiting them, in their open-worked silk stockings, and their coquettish little slippers with the high heels and the pink rosettes. Forty years ago you used to see waxen models, coloured to the life, of those feet (with the adjoining ankles), ay, and of those half-paralysed hands, in the shops of the Palais Royal and Regent-street, and the Great Moskaia at Petersburg. Forty years ago her portraits, in half a hundred costumes and a whole hundred attitudes, were to be found in every printseller's window in Europe. Forty years ago she was not Madame la Princesse Hatzoff, but Mademoiselle Marie Fragioli, the most famous opera-dancer of her age. The world

has quite forgotten her, but I doubt whether she has as completely forgotten the world : nay, I fancy that in her sumptuous retreat she sometimes rages, and is wretched at the thought that age, decrepitude, and her exalted rank compel her to wear long clothes, and that in the airiest of draperies she can no longer spring forward to the footlights, night after night, to be deafened by applause, and pelted with bouquets, and to find afterwards at the stage-door more bouquets, with diamond bracelets for holders, and reams of billet-doux on pink note-paper. Those triumphs, for her, are all over. They are enjoyed by sylphs as fair, as nimble, and as caressed as she has been ; and when she reads of their successes in the newspapers a bitter sickness comes across her. What artificer likes to reflect upon his loss of competency in his art? Are retired ambassadors, are generals hopelessly on half-pay, are superannuated statesmen, or the head-masters of public schools, who have retired on handsome pensions, so very happy, think you? Not so, perchance. Ambition survives capacity very often. The diplomatist clings to his despatch-bag, the soldier to his bâton of command, the minister to his red box, the pedant to his rod, the actor to his sock and buskin or his comic mask, long after the verdict of superfluity has been delivered ; long after the dread fiat of inefficiency has gone forth—the fiat proclaiming that the bellows are burned, that the lead is consumed of the fire, and that the founder worketh in vain.

All round the coasts of the Idle Lake there were retired celebrities. The district was a kind of prosperous Patmos, a St. Helena tenanted by voluntary exiles, a jovial Cave of Adullam. Here vegetated an enriched director of promenade concerts; there enjoyed his sumptuous 'otium' the ex-proprietor of dwarfs and giants, of learned pigs and industrious fleas; and in yonder Swiss châlet lived a lion-tamer, much famed on the Idle Lake for his proficiency in breeding rabbits. Millionnaire patentees of cough lozenges, bronchitic wafers, anti-asthmatical cigarettes, universal pills, and Good Samaritan ointments, abounded on the Lake; together with a group of wealthy veteran tenors, baritones, and bassi, several Parisian restaurateurs and café keepers who had realised large fortunes; a contractor of one of the Rhine watering-place gambling tables; many affluent linen-drapers and court milliners, and an English ex-butcher from Bond-street, as rich as Crœsus. All who were out of debt, and had nothing to grumble at, seemed to have gathered themselves together on these shores, leading a tranquil, dozy, dawdling kind of existence, so that you might have imagined them to be partakers before their time of the delights of some Eastern Elysium, and to be absorbed in the perpetual contemplation of Buddha.

But my days of relaxation on the banks of the Idle Lake came, with that autumn, to an end; and away I went into the 'ewigkeit,' always into the 'ewigkeit,' to be tossed about in more wars and

rumours of wars, and rebellions and revolutions. For years I have not set eyes upon the Idle Lake; but I often dream of it, and puzzle myself to determine whether it is situated somewhere between the Lake of Garda and the Lake of Como. But that there is such a Lake, and that it is gloriously Idle, I am very certain.

POSTE RESTANTE.

THERE are sermons in stones; but how many in letters! It matters little what may be within them. I have a whole batch now before me, which I do not intend ever to open; and one, I know by the post-mark, is fifteen years old. There is quite enough interest for me in their envelopes and their super-scriptions, in their crests and stamps, in the blots and the scratches they have picked up on their way. For a letter can, no more than a man, get through the world without some rubs, often of the hardest. Here is a dainty little pink thing of an envelope, longer than it is broad—a flimsy brick from the temple of love, shot away as rubbish long ago. It is directed in the beautifulest little Italian hand—so small that the effigy of her most gracious Majesty on the stamp might be, by comparison, the portrait of the sovereign of Brobdingnag. But, woe is me, that careless postman! The little letter, ere ever it reached me, tumbled into the mud. Dun brown splashes deface its fair outside. The mud is dry as dust now, but not dustier or drier than the memories which the envelope awakens.

Those droll dogs of friends you knew once were

addicted to sending you 'comic' envelopes through the post—monstrous caricatures of yourself, or themselves, sketched in pen and ink—waggish quatrains in the corner addressed to the postman, or to Mary the housemaid who took the letters in. They fondly hoped, the facetious ones, that the letter-carrier would crack his sides, that Mary would grin her broadest grin, at the sight of their funny letters. But Mary and the postman did nothing of the kind. Once in a way, perhaps, the hardworked servant of the G.P.O. who handed in the 'comic' missive would observe, 'He must be a rum un as sent *this*;' but the remark was made more in grim disparagement than in humorous appreciation. As for Mary, she would still farther turn up that nasal organ for which nature had already done a good deal in the way of elevation, and would remark, '*I* wonder people isn't above such trumperies.' Mary knew and revered the sanctity of the post. Did you ever study the outsides of servants' letters? When the housemaid has a military sweetheart, he is generally in the pedestrian branch of the service, and his hand being as yet more accustomed to the plough than to the pen, he induces a smart sergeant to address his letters for him. The non-commissioned officer's stiff, up-and-down, orderly-room hand is not to be mistaken. He is very gallant to the housemaid. He always calls her 'Miss' Mary Hobbs; but, on the other hand, he never omits to add a due recognition of yourself in the 'At William Penn's, Esq.' I have even known a sergeant ascend

to the regions of 'Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera,' and a flourish. Mary's old father, the ex-butcher, does not waste any vain compliments upon her or upon you. 'Mary Hobbs, housemaid at Mr. Penn's.' He is a courteous old gentleman, nevertheless: and if Mary shows you her letter, which she does sometimes in pardonable pride at the proficiency of her papa, who, 'although he was never no schollard and going on for seventy-three, is as upright as a Maypole,' you will rarely fail to discover, in the postscript, that he has sent his 'duty' to you.

But, I repeat, I have had enough in my time of the insides of letters, and I intend to write no more letters, and to read as few as ever I possibly can. With the aid of a poker, a good wide fireplace, and a box of matches, I got rid recently of a huge mass of old letters. It was the brightest of blazes, and you would have been astonished by the diminutiveness of the pile of sooty ashes which remained in the grate after that bonfire. Yet have you not seen in the little frescoed pigeon-holes of the Roman Columbaria, that a vase not much bigger than a gallipot will hold all that is mortal of one who was once senator, pro-consul, prætor—what you please? The ashes of a lifetime's letters will not more than fill a dustpan.

Dismissing the letters themselves, relegating them all to fiery death behind those bars, I linger over the envelopes; I dwell upon the postmarks, I long to be in the distant lands to which those marks refer.

There is vast room for speculation in the address of a letter, for, in the mass of handwritings you have seen, many have been forgotten. In the letter itself your curiosity is at once appeased, for you turn to the signature mechanically, and ten to one, if the letter be an old one, to read it gives you a sharp pang. Burn the letters, then; keep to the envelopes. Especially scan those which have been directed to you at hotels abroad. In very rare instances does the memory of a foreign hotel remind you of aught but pleasant things. You lived your life. The bills were heavy, but they were paid. You enjoyed. How good the pickled herrings were at the Oude Doelen at the Hague! What a famous four-poster they put you into at the Old Bible in Amsterdam! Could anything be better than the table-d'hôte at the Hôtel d'Angleterre at Berlin—save, perhaps, that at the Hôtel de Russie, close by, and that other Russie at Frankfort? That Drei Mohren at Augsburg was a good house too. What a cellar! what imperial tokay! 'Tis true that the waiter at Basle swindled you in the matter of the Bremen cigars, which he declared to be Havanas; but was not that little mishap amply atoned for at the Schweizer Hof, Lucerne, six hours afterwards? The Schweizer Hof! Dear me! how happy you were, idling about all day long, peering at Mount Pilate, or watching, with never-ending interest, the tiny boats on the bosom of the great blue lake! Here is an envelope directed to you at Cernobbio; another at the Villa d'Este; an-

other at Bellaggio, on the Lake of Como. Here come Salò and Desenzano, on the Lake of Garda. Ah! a villanous hostelry the last; but with what exultation you hurried back through Brescia to the clean and comfortable Hotel Cavour at Milan! You were rather short of money, perhaps, when you arrived in the capital of Lombardy. Your stock of circular notes was growing small. No cash awaited you at the Albergo Cavour—nay, nor letters either. But there would be letters for you, it was certain, at the Poste Restante. Quick, Portière, 'un broum'—Milanese for brougham, and not very wide of the mark. You hasten to the Poste Restante. There the letters await you; there is the stack of circular notes. Yes, and here among your envelopes at home is the banker's letter of advice, enumerating a hundred cities where he has agents who will gladly cash your notes at the current rate of exchange, deducting neither agio nor discount.

The postage and the reception of a letter in foreign countries—notably the less civilised—are events accompanied by circumstances generally curious and occasionally terrifying. I never saw a Chinese postman, but I can picture him as a kind of embodied bamboo, who presents you with your packet of correspondence with some preposterous ceremonial, or uses some outrageously hyperbolical locution to inform you that your letter is insufficiently stamped. As for the Russian Empire, I can vouch personally for the whole postal system of that tremendous do-

minion being, sixteen years ago, environed with a network of strange observances. The prepayment of a letter from St. Petersburg to England involved the attendance at at least three separate departments of the imperial post-office, and the administration of at least one bribe to a dingy official with a stand-up collar to his napless tail-coat, and the symbolical buttons of the 'Tchinn' on the band of his cap. As those who have ever made acquaintance with the stage doorkeepers of theatres in any part of the world are aware that those functionaries are generally eating something from a basin (preferably yellow), so those who have ever been constrained to do business with a Russian government clerk of the lower grades will remember that, conspicuous by the side of the blotting-pad (under which you slipped the rouble notes when you bribed him), there was always a soddened blue pocket-handkerchief, the which, rolled up into a ball, or twisted into a thong, or waved wide like a piratical flag, served him alternately as a sign of content, a gesture of refusal, or an emblem of defiance. You couldn't prepay your letter without this azure semaphore being put through the whole of its paces; unless, indeed, previous to attending the post-office, you took the precaution of requesting some mercantile friend to affix the stamp of his firm to your envelope. Then the official pocket-handkerchief assumed permanently the spherical or satisfied stage, and you had, moreover, the satisfaction of knowing that the stamp of the firm might stand you in good

stead as an Eastern firman, and that in all probability your letter would not be opened and read as a preliminary to its being dispatched to its destination.

So much for sending a letter, on which you seldom failed (purely through official oversight, of course) to be overcharged. There were two ways of receiving a letter, both equally remarkable. I used to live in a thoroughfare called the Cadetten-Linie, in the island of Wassili-Ostrow. It was about three times longer than that Upper Wigmore-street to which Sydney Smith declared that there was no end. When any English friend had sufficiently mastered the mysteries of Russian topographology as to write Cadetten-Linie and Wassili-Ostrow correctly, I got my letter. This was but seldom. It was delivered at the hotel where I resided in a manner which reminded me vaguely but persistently of the spectacle of Timour the Tartar, and of the Hetman Platoff leading a pulk of Cossacks over the boundless steppes of the Ukraine. The postman was one of the fiercest little men, with one of the fiercest and largest cocked-hats, I ever saw. His face was yellow in the bony and livid in the fleshy parts; and the huge moustache lying on his upper lip looked like a leech bound to suck away at him for evermore for some misdeeds of the Promethean kind.

This Russian postman: don't let me forget his sword, with its rusty leather scabbard and its brazen hilt, which seemed designed, like Hudibras's, to hold bread and cheese; and not omitting, again, the half dozen little tin-pot crosses and medals attached by

dirty scraps of particoloured ribbon to his breast; for this brave had 'served,' and had only failed to obtain a commission because he was not 'born.' This attaché of St. Sergius-le-Grand, if that highly-respectable saint can be accepted as a Muscovite equivalent for our St. Martin of Aldersgate, used to come clattering down the Cadetten-Linie on a shaggy little pony, scattering the pigeons, and confounding the vagrant curs. You know the tremendous stir at a review, when a chief, for no earthly purpose that I know of, save to display his horsemanship and to put himself and his charger out of breath, sets off, at a tearing gallop, from one extremity of the line to the other: the cock feathers in the hats of his staff flying out behind them like foam from the driving waters. Well: the furious charge of a general on Plumstead Marshes was something like the pace of the Russian postman. If he had had many letters to deliver on his way, he would have been compelled to modify the ardour of his wild career; but it always seemed to me that nineteen-twentieths of the Cadetten-Linie were taken up by dead walls, painted a glaring yellow, and that the remaining twentieth was occupied by the house where I resided. It was a very impressive spectacle to see him bring up the little pony short before the gate of the hotel, dismount, look proudly around, caress the ever-sucking leech on his lip—as for twisting the ends of it, the vampire would never have permitted such a liberty—and beckon to some passing Ivan Ivanovitch, with a ragged beard and

caftan, to hold his steed, or in default of any prowling Ivan being in the way, attach his pony's bridle to the palisades. It was a grand sound to hear him thundering—he was a little man, but he *did* thunder—up the stone stairs, the brass tip of his sword-scabbard bumping against his spurs, and his spurs clanking against the stones, and the gloves hanging from a steel ring in his belt, playing rub-a-dub-dub on the leather pouch which held his letters for delivery—*my* letters, my newspapers, when they hadn't been confiscated—with all the interesting paragraphs neatly daubed out with black paint by the censor. And when this martial postman handed you a letter, you treated him to liquor, and gave him copecks. All this kind of thing is altered, I suppose, by this time in Russia. I have seen the lowest order of police functionary—and the martial postman was first cousin to a polizei—seize Ivan Ivanovitch, if he offended him, by his ragged head, and beat him with his sword-belt about the mouth until he made it bleed. Whereas, in these degenerate days, I am told, a Russian gentleman who wears epaulettes, or a sword, is not allowed so much as to pull a droschky-driver's ears, or kick him in the small of the back, if he turn to the left instead of the right. Decidedly, the times are as much out of joint as a broken marionette.

I have no doubt, either, that the transaction of prepaying a letter has been very much simplified since the period in which I visited Russia. The Poste Restante also has, of course, been sweepingly re-

formed. Brooms were not used in Russia in my time, save for the purpose of thrashing Ivan Ivanovitch. The St. Petersburg Poste Restante in 1856 was one of the oddest institutions imaginable. It was a prudent course to take your landlord, or some Russian friend, with you, to vouch for your respectability. In any case, you were bound to produce your passport, or rather your 'permission to sojourn,' which had been granted to you—on your paying for it—when the police at Count Orloff's had sequestrated your Foreign Office passport. When divers functionaries—all of the type of him with the blotting-pad and the blue pocket-handkerchief—were quite satisfied that you were not a forger of rouble notes, or an incendiary, or an agent for the sale of M. Herzen's *Kolokol*, their suspicions gave way to the most unbounded confidence. You were ushered into a large room; a sack of letters from every quarter of the globe was bundled out upon the table; and you were politely invited to try if you could make out anything that looked as though it belonged to you. I am afraid that, as a rule, I did *not* obtain the property to which I was entitled, and somebody else had helped himself to that which belonged to me. I wonder who got my letters, and read them, or are they still mouldering in the Petropolitan Poste Restante?

Poste Restante! Poste Restante! I scan envelope after envelope. I know the Poste Restante in New York, with its struggling, striving crowd of German and Irish emigrants, craving for news from the dear

ones at home. In connection with this department of the American postal service, I may mention, that in the great Atlantic cities they have an admirable practice of issuing periodically alphabetical lists of persons for whom letters have arrived by the European mails 'to be left till called for,' or whose addresses cannot be discovered. The latter cases are very numerous; letters addressed, 'Franz Hermann, New York,' or 'My Cousin Biddy in Amerikey,' not being uncommon.

I roam from pillar to post, always 'Restante;' and ten years slip away, and I come upon an envelope inscribed 'Poste Restante, Madrid.' There is another name for this traveller's convenience in Spanish, but I have forgotten it. Otherwise 'Poste Restante' belongs to the universal language. Everybody knows what it means. The Madrileña Poste Restante is, like most other things of Spain, a marvel and a mystery. You reach the post-office itself by a dirty little street called, if I remember aright, the Calle de las Carretas, one of the thoroughfares branching from that Castilian Seven Dials, the Puerta del Sol. The entrance to the office is in a dingy little alley, lined with those agreeable blackened stone walls, relieved by dungeon-like barred windows, common in the cities of northern Spain. Opposite the post-office door cower a few little book-stalls, where you may buy cheap stationery; and there, in a little hutch, in aspect between a sentry-box and a cobbler's-stall, used to sit a public scribe, who, for the consideration of a few reals, would

indite petitions for such supplicants as deemed that their prayers would be more readily listened to by authority if they were couched in words of four syllables, and written in fat round characters, with flourishes or 'parafos' to all the terminals. The scribe also would write love-letters for lovelorn swains of either sex, whose education had been neglected.

I don't think I ever knew such a black, dirty, and decayed staircase as that of the Madrid post-office, save perhaps that of the Mont de Piété, Paris. You ascended, so it seemed, several flights, meeting on the way male and female phantoms, shrouded in cloaks or in mantillas. The mingled odour of tobacco smoke, of garlic, and of Spain—for Spain has its peculiar though indescribable odour—was wonderful. The odds were rather against you, when you visited the Poste Restante, that the occasion might be a feast or a fast day of moment. In either case the office opened late, and closed early; and the hour selected for your own application was usually the wrong one. If the postal machine were in gear, you pushed aside a green baize door and entered a long low apartment, with a vaulted roof of stone. Stuck against the whitewashed walls were huge placards covered with names more or less illegible. Knots of soldiers in undress stood calmly contemplating those lists. I don't think a tithe of the starers expected any letters; it was only another way of passing the time. A group of shovel-hatted priests would be gravely scanning another list; a party of black-hooded women

would be gossiping before a third; and everybody would be smoking.

You wandered into another vaulted room, and there you found your own series of lists—those of the 'estrangeros.' In the way of reading those lists madness lay. The schedules belonging to several months hung side by side. There were names repeated thrice over, names written in different coloured inks, names crossed out, names blotted, names altered, names jobbed at with a penknife so as to be indecipherable, by some contemplative spirit in a sportive mood. The arrangement of names was alphabetical, but arbitrary. Sometimes the alphabet began at A, and sometimes at T. The system of indexing was equally mysterious. I will suppose your name to be Septimus Terminus Optimus Penn. To this patronymic and prefixes your correspondent in England has foolishly added the complimentary Esquire. Under those circumstances the best thing you could do was to look for yourself under the head of 'Esquire.' Failing in unearthing yourself, then you might try Optimus and Terminus, and so up to Penn. When you found yourself a number was affixed to you. At one extremity of the apartment was a grating, and behind that grating sat an old gentleman in a striped dressing-gown and a black velvet skull-cap. If you can imagine a very tame and sleepy tiger at the Zoological Gardens, smoking a cigarito, and with bundles of letters and newspapers, in lieu of shin bones of beef, to eat, you may realise the idea of that old gen-

tleman in his cage at the Poste Restante behind the Puerta del Sol. You spake him kindly, and called him 'Caballero.' He bowed profoundly and returned your compliment. Then you told him your number, and handed your passport through the bars. He looked at the number and he looked at the passport. Then he kindled another cigarito; then, in a preoccupied manner, he began the perusal of a leading article in the *Epoca* of that morning. Then after a season, remembering you, he arose, offered you a thousand apologies, and went away out of the cage altogether, retiring into some back den—whether to look for your letters, or to drink his chocolate, or to offer his orisons to San Jago de Compostella, is uncertain. By this time there were generally two or three free and independent Britons clamouring at the bars—the Briton who threatened to write to the *Times;* the Briton who declared that he should place the whole matter in the hands of the British ambassador; and the persistent Briton who simply clung to the grate, or battered at the doortrap with an umbrella, crying, 'Hi! Mossoo! Donnez-moi mon lettèr. Larrup, Milk-street, Cheapside, à Londres. Donnez-moi. Look alive, will you!' At last the old gentleman returned, lighted another cigarito, and began to look for your letters. For whose letters is he looking now, I wonder, and where?

Poste Restante! Poste Restante! It has rested for me close to the Roman Pantheon, and under the shadow of that blood-stained sacrificial stone by the great Cathedral of Mexico. Poste Restante! How

many times have I journeyed towards it with fluttering pulse and a sinking in my throat—how many times have I come from it with my pocket full of dollars, or my eyes full of tears; tears that were sometimes of joy, and sometimes—but not often—of sorrow! The Poste Restante has been to me, these many years, a smooth and a kind post, on the whole.

THE END.

LONDON:
ROBSON AND SONS, PRINTERS, PANCRAS ROAD, N.W.

00058799

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018